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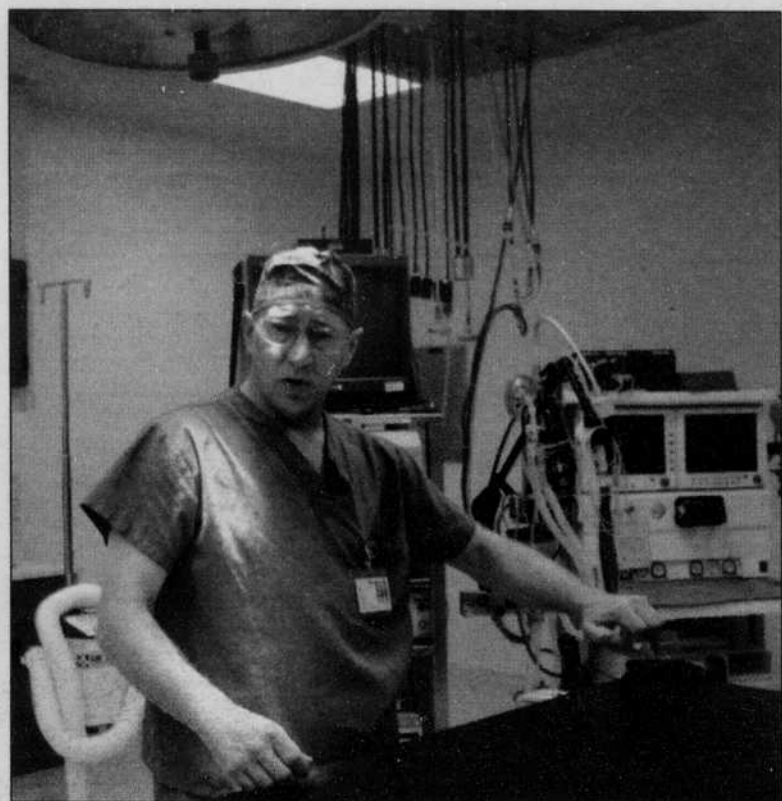
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Tim Bobosky Photographer
Sacred Heart Medical Center surgical technician Ken Swift found work this year in a field that is currently experiencing a 17-percent growth rate.

ECONOMY

continued from page 1

doing pretty good."

Since June, Hynix has hired 150 employees, totaling 850 total employees in Eugene. Considering that the company exports all of its chips to a corporate facility in Korea for packaging and purchases, Kim said outsourcing isn't a threat to the company.

"There have been signs of recovery for the macro-economy, which should encourage more consumers to invest in Hynix," he said.

Employment services and business support services showed particularly strong gains with 500 jobs and 300 jobs in October, respectively. Both industries have posted substantial job gains since October 2002 as well, Cooke said.

"Employment services are the leading indicator of economic expansion because often firms will turn to them to handle any excess demands," he said. "It's a positive sign for the next few months."

One consistent indicator of economic expansion during the last three years

has been employment in health care. In October 2003, health care and social assistance gained 164,700 jobs, which is about 2,700 more than 2002.

"Health care employment continues to grow despite economic times primarily because of the aging population in Oregon," Cooke said. "People in their 50s, 60s and 70s tend to use health care more often."

Sacred Heart Medical Center Surgical Technician Ken Swift is one of thousands of Oregonians who have found work this year.

"It's a feeling of satisfaction and a challenge because it will be a while before I find the job (too) routine," the 48-year-old said.

Swift interviewed with PeaceHealth in early March and trained at a facility in Alaska for several months before obtaining his position.

"School is all well and good, but experience is everything in this field," he said.

John Alexander, manager of customer relations in the Sacred Heart Medical Center human resources department, said he wouldn't call the 17-percent health care employment growth rate huge — just adequate.

"Health care has hit a sort of lull because of a recent nurse shortage," he said. "We're just doing a good job filling our positions."

In the last six months, Sacred Heart has filled more than 300 positions out of the current 4,000 employees with a rate of approximately 50 jobs a month. And although other industries are not currently succeeding as much as health care, Alexander said he is optimistic about the future.

"As more jobs develop in Lane County and more people move to the area, our services should increase as well," he said. "All in all, Cooke said Oregonians should have hope for the near future of employment nationwide."

"We've seen national economic data showing the economy is strengthening," he said. "Overall, the recent numbers are showing signs of encouragement."

The Employment Department will release Oregon's statewide unemployment rate and employment survey data for November 2003 on Dec. 12.

Contact the business/science/technology reporter at caronalarab@dailyemerald.com.

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