



Andrew Conrad, a junior at Astoria High School, center, was most intrigued by the police departments. "I thought they were really interesting," he said.



Photos by Luke Whittaker/EO Media Group
Warrenton junior Robert Barber came dressed to impress. "I would like to be an ER doctor," Barber said.



Left to right: Senavda Afornorpe and Kennady Tull, both seniors at Astoria High School, were seeking jobs in the medical field.

Fair: 'It's difficult for employers to find good help'

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Lumber, before finding his way to Paul Mitchell, director of marketing at Columbia Memorial. Davis listened as Mitchell spoke about the health care profession, an interest that's grown for Davis while doing a senior project with mentor Chad Rankin, a certified athletic trainer at the hospital.

Henry Meiners, another senior at Astoria High School, has his sights set on a different career.

"I'm interested in becoming a police officer here," Meiners said.

"I was asking some of the (police) departments here what college they went to and if they think it's beneficial for me to go and get a degree. They were very helpful," he said. Meiners plans to study two years at Clatsop Community College.

Not everyone was certain what they want to do, but most left with a better idea.

"I'm keeping my options open, just seeing what there is," Andrew Conrad, an Astoria High School junior, said. But after a moment, Conrad conceded that he thought the police departments were "really interesting."

Employers

One seafood processor was looking to catch a few com-



A trio of guest speakers included an entrepreneur, an elected official and a local, professional forester.

Luke Whittaker/EO Media Group

mitted employees after having issues with high turnover.

"We hire up to 200 employees at a time to process sardines, whiting, shrimp and squid — depending on the season," Da Yang Seafood human resources manager Adriana Ortega said. The bulge in seasonal employment is needed not only to match increased catch com-

ing in, but also because of high turnover.

"The biggest challenge is getting people to stay for the whole season," Ortega said. "Sometimes the season drops a little bit, so they think it's over and start to look for other jobs — it's up and down all the time." Oregon State University

forestry and natural resources extension agent Valerie Grant greeted several students at the first booth upon entering the fair. Grant was working alongside other forest and wood product industries to connect students to potential careers in the field.

"Lots of kids like to be outside and a lot of these jobs are

working in the field," Grant said.

Billie Jo Edmonds, general manager for Mo's Restaurant in Cannon Beach, was busy recruiting summer staff for their new restaurant location in Astoria.

Edmonds praised the exposure the career fair brings for potential hires.

"It's a great opportunity," Edmonds said. "We love the career fair."

Employment landscape

Employment opportunities in Clatsop County are changing and diversifying, according to organizer Kevin Leahy, director of Clatsop Economic Development Resources.

"I think it's evolving in the sense that we've always had our strong natural resource industries, which continue to be very strong," Leahy said.

"Sometimes people think that the forest products, logging and fishing are dead, but it's still very vibrant in Clatsop County — about half of our income and employment," he said.

Leahy sees health care and craft beer among the new, burgeoning industries.

"There's diversification happening in our region that we didn't used to have," he said.

Smooth success

Leahy believes the event went "very well" overall.

"This is our third year of doing this and each year it gets better," he said. More than 70 employers participated in what has become and increasingly tight Clatsop County labor market.

"It's difficult for employers to find good help," Leahy said. "We hope this is an opportunity for employers, students and general job seekers."



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