

**Survey: Area spring hiring outlook good***Jon Knutson**The Forum - 03/11/2008*

If you're looking for a job this spring, Fargo-Moorhead should be a good place to find one, a national survey says.

Forty-seven percent of local employers plan to increase their staff from April to June, according to the new quarterly survey from Manpower Inc., an international employment services company.

None of the local employers expect to reduce payrolls, the survey said.

Job prospects this spring appear best in construction, durable goods manufacturing, transportation/public utilities, wholesale/retail trade, finance/insurance/real estate, and education and services.

Hiring in nondurable goods manufacturing and public administration is expected to remain unchanged.

Fargo-Moorhead's hiring outlook this spring is slightly brighter than a year ago, when 43 percent of companies surveyed planned to increase staff levels and 3 percent expected to cut payrolls, said Lora Schiltz of Manpower's Fargo office.

The metro economy benefits from its diversity, including its health-care, manufacturing and education sectors, said Brian Walters, president of the Greater Fargo-Moorhead Economic Development Corp.

The community also has avoided the housing slump that has hit much of the nation, he said.

The area's strong farm sector, bolstered by record crop prices, strengthens the metro economy, too, he said.

Marty Aas, Fargo area manager for Job Service North Dakota, also is optimistic about spring hiring.

"It's looking pretty good," he said.

The market for college students seeking summer jobs seems strong, as does demand for construction workers, he said.

Fargo's job outlook is much stronger than the national picture, according to the survey.

Nationwide, 26 percent of employers plan to increase their staff, with 9 percent expecting to reduce staff.

Gulfport, Miss., has the nation's strongest job outlook. Eighty-three percent of employers there expect to increase staff this spring,

the survey said.

Gulfport, on the Gulf of Mexico, is Mississippi's second-largest city and an educational, commercial and manufacturing center, according to the Gulfport Chamber of Commerce's Web site.

The quarterly Manpower surveys are based on interviews with more than 14,000 public and private employers in 460 market areas across the country.

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