

For hire: EDawn pursues Bay Area workers

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Tribune/Krystal Bick - Amy Martin, corporate recruiting manager for Sierra Nevada Corporation, is working closely with the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada to promote Reno/Tahoe businesses to skilled Bay Area workers.

Calling all Bay Area skilled workers...

Recently, Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC) announced a \$117 million contract with ORBCOMM Inc., a global data communications company, to build 18 new spacecraft to upgrade its current satellite constellation, elevating its status as a company among other reputable subcontractors.

But it wouldn't have been possible were it not for the highly trained professionals to do the work, and skilled software, electrical and mechanical engineers for which a

plentiful pool of candidates is not always available in northern Nevada, said SNC corporate recruiting manager Amy Martin.

“At times, it’s good to broaden the reach,” she said. “Reno is a smaller community and it’s nice to have opportunities.”

Martin said looking outside of northern Nevada for skilled laborers may be the cup of invigoration the region needs to remain economically viable.

The Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada (EDAWN) agrees and is launching a campaign to expand local employers’ recruitment reach in the San Francisco Bay Area on Thursday. The effort includes a job event called “Beers and Careers with Reno/Tahoe” that will take place from 6 to 9 p.m. at San Francisco’s historic Ferry Building.

The campaign targets professionals 30 years and older and invites them to enjoy Greater Reno-Tahoe’s hybrid lifestyle with affordable housing, less commute time, outdoor recreation and a number of skilled job opportunities.

Gail Conkey, EDAWN’s director of marketing, said companies have always expressed a concern about hiring and keeping good workers. Conkey said EDAWN responded and began brainstorming about how they could fill open positions in Reno-Tahoe while marketing the region’s unique lifestyle.

“There are a lot of companies that recruit locally, but they can’t recruit all needs locally,” she said. “There are lots of job sets and backgrounds that make the work force diverse.”

The region also showed itself to be appealing for a campaign of this nature after 1,400 skilled professionals were surveyed. The results showed that the Bay Area

was among eight U.S. cities that have a cost of living greater or equal to Reno-Tahoe. A majority of those employees indicated that they would consider living in Reno-Tahoe.

EDAWN also is looking to the Bay Area because many employees have a college degree, Conkey said.

“We can’t prescreen everyone who comes, but we knew being in an area like the Bay Area that they’re the kind of targets that we’d go after,” she said. “So we’re going to create a conversation about Reno-Tahoe and make personal connections with job career networking.”

Of 16 businesses, including International Game Technology, Microsoft Licensing, and Renown Health, several Reno and Sparks companies are taking part in the launch either in hopes of fulfilling their own recruitment needs or helping the region economically, such as Kiley Ranch.

Megan Kiley, in charge of community relations and marketing, said Kiley Ranch is not necessarily seeking out skilled workers at this time, but it supports the campaign.

“Kiley Ranch stands to gain by getting its name out there so we can be a California community as well as a Reno community,” she said. “We’re creating a sense of leadership of land and creating a town within a town where it’s full of community shopping and schools and business parks. Hopefully, it’ll give people the opportunity to live and work in the same area.”

Kiley said attracting skilled workers, such as those needed in the medical industry, would limit drive time for those who commute from California to Reno-Tahoe and essentially saving money and the environment.

“We have wildlife and wetland preserves, lots of open space...which ties into respect for the land,” Kiley said. “It’s respect for nature and the mountains.”

Kiley said she considers the campaign a “great marketing tool” that will generate interest for EDAWN and its Web site.

“I really do think (going online) is the wave of the future,” she said. “It’s a symbiotic relationship; we’re not actively recruiting but if people were to come here, they’d want to know that Sparks is a phenomenal community.”

Among the businesses that are seeking out applicants, Martin said SNC is hiring for about 150 positions nationally, 30 of which are local and include tech positions in electronics as well as human resources and accounting.

“I think the community has a lot to gain in an effort like this,” she said.

The ideal company to work with, Conkey said, is the kind “that brings high-wage jobs to the area and is proactive in recruiting (skilled) workers.”

But she also emphasized that the major selling point of northern Nevada's lifestyle is just as important as the job availability.

“We heard from a lot of companies and they spend more time talking about the region and not the actual positions we have available,” she said. “The two are very, very tied together.”

The campaign largely is promoting itself on its Web site, www.mynvdreamjob.com, which Conkey said provides online opportunities to check out the greater Reno-Tahoe region.

She hopes the people who come will appreciate northern Nevada's job and living environment.

“These are folks who are not necessarily actively looking for a job, but they're intrigued by our community marketing or really tired of the rat race and want to raise a family and they say, ‘Wow, they have software engineering and the depth of the companies like IGT and Microsoft — I didn't know all that was there.’ “

Today, a mini-event will be held in San Francisco to drive potential workers to Thursday's event.

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