

PREFERRED Adviser

WORKER

Spring 2000

Information for Preferred Workers who haven't yet used their return-to-work incentives

January 2000 *Oregon Careers* publication now available

by Barbara Smith

The Employment Department recently published a 48-page magazine about employment in Oregon. It offers a wealth of information on occupations in Oregon, including a career guide that describes each occupation, demand for workers in each occupation, the occupation's average wages, the number em-

ployed in each occupation in Oregon, the required level of training, licensing information if a license is required, and Oregon schools that offer training for each occupation.

You can get a copy of this useful publication by writing to the Workforce Analysis Section, Oregon

Employment Department, 875 Union St. NE, Room 207, Salem, OR 97311, or by calling the Employment Department, (503) 947-1266, toll-free, (800) 237-3710, ext. 7-1266, or TDD, (800) 947-1391. ■

Government jobs-search help

by Barbara Smith

As this article is being written, the state of Oregon is recruiting for more than 350 positions. These jobs require a broad range of skills, experience, and education. You can get information about any of these job openings at your local Employment Department field office. The Employment Department can also supply you with application forms and instructions for applying for each position.

If you have access to the Internet, you can get state job information on the Department of Administrative Services Web site: <http://www.dashr.state.or.us/jobs/>.

Another Web site useful to job seeker's: <http://findit.emp.state.or.us/publinks/joblinks.cfm>. Here, Employment Department provides links to job information on city and county government jobs, state and federal jobs, and military careers. ■

Success Story

by Dan Gammon

Dan, a 51-year-old worker, injured his left ankle while working as a forklift driver for a Portland firm that sells new and restored manufacturing machinery for the wood products industry. Before his injury, Dan had worked for this company for more than 16 years. His employer recognized he was a valued employee. She offered Dan a modified job that would allow him to continue to use his knowledge and skills for the company.

After his claim was closed, Dan had permanent restrictions from standing and walking more than four hours a day, climbing stairs, and walking on slopes or uneven ground.

His employer offered Dan a modified job breaking down old air and hydraulic components used in plywood manufacturing systems, replacing defective and worn parts, and testing reassembled equipment.

The Preferred Worker Program, Dan and his employer identified the following modifications to his workstation to accommodate Dan's permanent restrictions: a parts washer with a raised basin that is accessible from a seated position, an adjustable-height work-table with a reinforced steel surface; and an electric-powered cart to transport the worker and components to various locations within the employer's large assembly and storage buildings.

These purchases — along with a sit/stand stool the employer furnished while Dan was in temporary light duty — have allowed Dan to continue working for his employer.

Dan told the re-employment consultant that this modified job has made him feel whole and worthwhile again.

These worksite modifications cost \$9,200. ■

Preparing for a job interview

by Barbara Smith

The job interview is usually your most important opportunity to sell yourself for the job you want. Taking the time to prepare for the interview will boost your self-confidence and boost your chance of making a favorable impression.

Before the interview

1. Take a copy of your resume with you. If you don't have one, prepare a "pocket resume" that includes the following:
 - Names of your past employers, their addresses, and phone numbers
 - Your job titles and dates of employment
 - Your supervisors' names
 - Names of schools you have attended, with addresses, highest grade completed, and the course or degree
 - Any special licenses and certificates you hold, including expiration dates
 - Your driver's license number
 - Your social security number
 - An alternate (message) phone number, if necessary
2. Learn all you can about the employer before the interview. Know the company's principal products or services. If possible, learn who the company's customers are. The more you know about the company, the better

idea you'll have about what they are looking for in an employee.

3. Have a specific job (or jobs) in mind. Think ahead of time about how your experience and education prepares you for that job.
4. Review why you would make a good employee. Don't overlook such reasons as these:
 - I have a strong work ethic.
 - I enjoy making a contribution.
 - I am flexible.
 - I am dependable.
 - I look forward to the challenge.
5. Be prepared to answer broad questions such as: "How does this position fit into your career plan?" and "Where do you see yourself five years from now?"
6. Be sure you understand all the benefits you can offer from the Preferred Worker Program. Make sure you understand how the program protects the employer from higher workers' compensation premiums in the future. Make sure you understand how the employer can receive assistance if you need worksite modification in order to perform your job duties. Practice explaining the benefits, and take a brochure with you to the interview.
7. Know where the interview will take place. Unless you are sure of its location, drive there ahead of

time so that you won't be late because you can't find the place.

At the interview

1. Be on time for the interview. It's a good practice to plan to be 10 minutes early.
2. Go alone to the interview.
3. Dress neatly and appropriately for the job.
4. Listen carefully to the information given and the questions asked by the interviewer.
5. Answer questions directly and truthfully.
6. If you are asked to fill out an application or take a test, be thorough and write legibly.
7. There is no set rule about when to mention the Preferred Worker Program. If you feel the interview is going well, and the employer has no apparent concern about your ability to do the job, there is probably no need to mention it in the first interview. But if your on-the-job injury has come up, and the employer is concerned about your ability to do the job, explain the program benefits. Show the employer the brochure. Encourage the employer to call the PWP right away for further explanation from program staff. (The toll-free number is in the brochure.) ■

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Questions & answers

by Linda Strunk

Q Once I have been hired, do I hand over my Preferred Worker Identification Card and wage subsidy contract to my new employer right away?

A Yes and no. You have 90 days from the date you started work to offer your Preferred Worker benefits to your new employer. If you do, be sure and read the front and back of your card carefully. You and your employer need to fill out the back of the card, sign and date the card, and send it to us within 90 days of the date you started work. If you want to offer the wage subsidy contract to your employer, again, read it carefully, sign and date it (along with your employer) and send it in within 90 days of your

start-work date. Do not sign your name to a blank contract; as with any other legal document, you want to be sure you understand what you are signing.

Q Will RAU approve a Preferred Worker obtained-employment-purchase (OEP) agreement for purchases like clothing, if exact items and prices are not known?

A Yes, the Reemployment Assistance Unit will approve obtained-employment-purchase agreements for a specific number of items if they are described adequately (“four dress shirts”, “two pairs of casual slacks”) and appear reasonable for a particular job. These OEPs may include tools and equipment as well as clothing.

RAU will always indicate a maximum amount for purchases. This permits workers to be certain how many items and how much money the program has approved; workers can then shop for needed items knowing they will be reimbursed or will get an authorization for payment. Workers should not make additions or substitutions after an agreement is approved, or they may not be reimbursed. ■

Meet your Preferred Worker Program representatives

by Jerry Rutherford

If you need worksite modification and work in one of the nine Southern Oregon counties, you will most likely be talking and problem-solving with Joe Leczel.

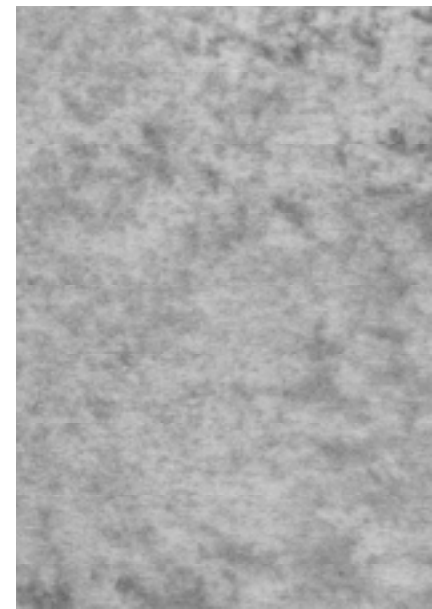
Joe works in our Medford field office, where he has been the worksite modification consultant since 1994. Joe's prior work experience includes 10 years as a police officer with the Los Angeles Police Department, five years coordinating vocational assistance for injured workers, and eight years resolving vocational-assistance disputes. Joe has an associate degree in administration of justice, a bachelor's degree in psychology, a master's degree in biblical studies, and a doctor of ministries degree in pastoral studies.

Joe says he really likes to meet and talk with people and to help overcome their injury-caused barriers to employment. Joe can relate to

the injured workers he helps. He suffered a serious on-the-job injury while working as a police officer. Joe has lived through physical pain and the mental anguish of having to change careers and uproot his family to find another job.

On the personal side, Joe's faith and commitment to God and his family top his list of priorities. Joe and his wife Sally live in the Rogue River area, amongst deer, cougars, and various other critters. He and Sally have been married for 32 years. Joe loves to visit with and spoil his four grandkids, but is happy to return them to his own children to raise. Joe is active in his church and currently serves as an elder and leads bible studies. He has served as youth director, also. Joe's hobbies include woodworking, model ship building, camping, and fishing.

If you need help, Joe will be happy to assist you in any way that he can. Joe's phone numbers: (800) 696-7161 or (541) 776-6032. You can e-mail him at joseph.f.leczel@state.or.us. ■



Hand truck with brake

by Barbara Smith

Worker disability — A 28-year-old freight delivery driver sustained a left knee injury and was restricted to a 50-pound limit for lifting, pushing, and pulling.

Work setting — The worker returned to modified regular work, which involves moving heavy appliances and pallet loads of various materials. For these large items, he now uses an electric pallet jack to eliminate the push-and-pull requirements beyond his restrictions. He uses a lift gate on his truck to deliver items at locations without loading docks.

Substantial obstacles — Some delivery sites require him to move relatively small loads on a hand truck down ramps. Taking the loaded handtruck down a ramp strains the worker's injured knee and causes knee pain.

Modification — The worker uses a hand truck with a hand brake while taking loads down a ramp.

Cost of modification — Cost of a hand truck with brake: \$375



440-3269 3/00/COM)



Workers' Compensation Educational Conference

October 23-25, 2000
Marriott Hotel
Portland, Oregon

Presentations and information booths will cover topics for the entire workers' compensation community:

- insurers
- self-insurers
- TPAs
- medical providers
- vocational consultants
- managed care organizations
- attorneys
- employers
- injured workers

To be on the mailing list, please register online at: <http://www.cbs.state.or.us/wcd/docs/educonf.htm> or, contact Billie Healy, (503) 947-7622, or Jan Miller, (503) 947-7723.

The registration fee is \$200. Registration packets will be mailed in July.

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