

engineers, protective workers, and more. A full 70 percent of employees work full-time, and most part-time employees (68%) choose to work less than a full-time schedule. If you want an engaging, competitive career...consider a job in the retail industry.

EMPLOYMENT DOS AND DON'TS

'Tis the season to find a job. Many job searchers are convinced that searching between Thanksgiving and the middle of January is a waste of time, but if you buy into this myth you lose one of the better job searching seasons of the year.

Here are some helpful tips:

- Do part-time, seasonal and/or temporary work. Working part-time is better than no work at all. It adds to your resume and is an excellent way to show your talents to a prospective employer.

But, don't put off applying for full-time work during the holiday season. There is always turnover — no matter what time of the year it is.

- Network. Exploit the season by attending parties or gatherings, and by aligning yourself with people who might know about job openings. Many times your best source for job openings is friends and acquaintances with inside knowledge about current or future positions.

- Unemployment happens. Understand that losing a job, being out of work, and having to look for a new position are stressful, and that you're not alone. Many people are experiencing this same situation or have gone through periods

of unemployment.

- Get organized. Design a new resume, post on-line and be methodical about your job search. Do something that is related to your job search every day.

- Avoid bad habits. Get in shape and focus on your health. Do not let the negative voices in your head get the best of you.

- Stay positive and be patient. Understand that it does take time to find employment, but that having an upbeat attitude will help you be successful. Today's new education and training opportunity can become tomorrow's job.

The holiday season usually offers time for thoughts about family and future as we celebrate religious festivals and begin a new year. For people who are unemployed or are concerned about company downsizing, this season can be filled with great uncertainty. For those who are challenged by unemployment, please know that opportunities can be found during this season — even in this tough economy.

Visit www.BerkshireWorks.org for assistance on job search, career planning, job listings, job clubs, workshops on job search techniques, data on labor market trends, resources to help find the right training opportunities, and tools to help you conduct an effective job search.

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Business

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INSIDE THE JOB MARKET

Retail is the pulse of consumer spending

BY HEATHER BOULGER

PITTSFIELD — Consumers are prepared for a holly, jolly holiday season, according to the National Retail Federation's holiday consumer survey. The average holiday shopper is expected to spend \$769.32 on gifts, décor, greeting cards and more, more than they actually spent last year.

Holiday sales are expected to increase 3.6 percent to \$665 billion. And, here are some other holiday retail facts: consumers are expected to spend an average of \$460.67 on family, \$76.83 on friends, \$24.75 on co-worker's gifts, \$28.23 on pets, and \$207 on candy, food, decorations, cards/postage and flowers.

That's a lot of money. Did you know that the retail industry is the second largest industry in Berkshire County and represents 14.1 percent of the workforce? Did you know that there are 8,587 people employed in the Berkshire economy? And did you know that retail is one of the country's most technically advanced and innovative sectors, offering varied and rewarding career possibilities? It may not appear that way, but it is.

Many retail jobs involve high degrees of skill, whether they be in food hygiene or nutrition, logistics, planning and construction, design, marketing or buying. Anyone whose job results

in a consumer product — from those who supply the raw materials to the factory workers who make the products to the truck drivers who deliver the goods — counts on the retail sector for their livelihood.

According to the NRF, 71 percent of retail store businesses have fewer than 10 employees, and the industry as a whole supports one out of every four jobs in the U.S. Half of all working teenagers have jobs in retail. According to the Society for Human Resources Management, retail is the country's third highest industry in employee turnover behind hotels and restaurants (first) and

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