

Clark County gains 2,200 jobs in February

A total of 182,700 Clark County residents were employed during February, according to the monthly report on employment statistics issued today by the state Department of Employment Security, a 2,200 increase over the 180,500 employed during January.

The increase from a year ago is also significant, up 6,900 from 175,800 jobs reported for February 2004.

But, alas, the labor force has increased, too. The increase from January to February this year was 2,600, to a total workforce of 196,900. So, despite the good news, the seasonally unadjusted unemployment rate rose in February to 7.2 percent from 7.1 percent in January, but this is better than the 9.6 unemployment rate a year ago in February.

The statewide unadjusted unemployment rate for February stood at 6.4 percent, compared to a month earlier when it was 6.2 percent. The nationwide unadjusted unemployment rate for February was 5.8 percent.

Utility commissioner support 60-year-old appliance repair program with resolution

By a resolution adopted by Clark Public Utilities commissioners today, the utility urged the chair of the state House Technology, Energy and Communications Committee, **Jeff Morris** (D-40th), to approve a bill that would remove a legal cloud over the utility's 60-year-old appliance repair program and send the bill to a vote in the House of Representatives.

Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5348, originally sponsored by state Sen. **Craig Pridemore** (D-49th), is expected to be given a hearing in Morris's committee at 1:30 p.m. Friday, March 18.

Clark Public Utilities inherited the appliance repair program from the private utilities from which the utility was formed in the 1940s, and had continued the appliance repair program ever since. In recent years repair program has come under attack from some southern Washington heating and air conditioning companies who claim unfair competition. And, twice, courts have ruled that the practice is illegal. The matter currently is being heard by the state Supreme Court.

The commissioner's resolution says that the service, which only provides repairs for existing large heating and cooling household appliances, such as electric heaters, heat pumps, water heaters and ovens, has coexisted with private sector vendors for about 60 years.

The utility's Guaranteed Hot Water service is a one-of-a-kind service being used by 14,000 customers, according to the resolution.

The resolution points out that the utility's service repair technicians are trusted, popular and valuable, and that the services offered are self-financing and are not subsidized by other customer rate structures.

State's business tax structure helped bring Concannon Paper to Clark County

The major reason for the recent move by Concannon Paper Inc. from Portland to Clark County is Washington's tax structure, reports **Bart Phillips**, executive director of Columbian River Economic Development Council.

Mike Concannon, president of the company, says: "Southwest Washington offers us the best of all worlds. Washington's tax structure is too good for a family-run business like ours to pass up, and we will be able to stay in the Portland metropolitan area, which we have all grown to love.

"In addition, estate and family succession issues, as they relate to tax consequences, also were of consideration. Finally, the wealth of building sites available in Southwest Washington made it easy to move."

Concannon Paper is located in a new 36,000-square-foot building in the 121st Avenue Business Park and employs 16 people.

According to Phillips, Washington is one of only seven states that does not levy a personal income tax. In addition, the state does not have corporate taxes, inventory taxes, unitary taxes, or taxes on interest, dividends or capital gains.

Hopes and fears of diverse families subject of Library Forum Thursday

The Forum at the Library presents "Today's Diverse Families: Their Hopes, Their Fears" at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 17, in the Vancouver Community Library Hall. There is no charge.

Moderator is **Ron Morrison**. Panelists are **Jean Walter**, Clark County Family Court Services coordinator, **Diana Avalos**, migrant education coordinator, Vancouver School District, **Laurie Cornelius**, director of Children

and Family Services, Clark College, and **Jim Sikkel**, a single parent in the gay, lesbian, bi and transsexual community.

News briefs

Clark County commissioners meet in an informal session at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 16. ☞ The Clark County Fairgrounds exposition building will be dedicated at 3 p.m. Wednesday, March 16. The building will be open for public inspection until 7 p.m.

Tuesday headlines from at home and around the world:

[School districts and other officials going to see Mohegan casino in Uncasville, Conn., tax payers paying their way--Columbian, **Am McFall Prince**](#)

[Larry Cassidy reappointed to Northwest Power Planning Council--Columbian](#)

[Christensen's ships keep coming in--and going out--Columbian, **Jonathan Nelson**](#)

[Vancouver Clinic's Salmon Creek medical building underway--Columbian, **Julia Anderson**](#)

[Seattle senator introduced a bill favoring only WSU Vancouver, local delegation skeptical--Oregonian, **Brian Turner**](#)

[Eagle Scout project maps Vancouver Lake depth, likely to save money and speed up quest to save lake--Oregonian, **Bill Stewart**](#)

[Italian troops will pull out of Iraq beginning in September--USA TODAY, AP](#)

Tuesday on the air

City Minutes—4:30 p.m. CVTV

Clark County Close Up—5 p.m. CVTV

Clark County Focus—5:30 p.m. CVTV

Vancouver Land Use Hearings (live)—7 p.m. CVTV

Town Tabloids and the weather

Nancy Barnes holding back gestures. ☞ **Byron Hanke** promising moon. ☞ **Deb Wallace** slaying blackberry vines. ☞ **Vicky Hyun** taking care of details. ☞ **Kathy** and **Kara Condon** and **Paula Johnson**, luncheon celebratorially on the veranda. ☞ **Tuesday**, cool sunshine continues, 62. **Wednesday**, early morning showers likely, 57. **Thursday**, mostly sunny, 59.