

Southeast Texas Community Audit

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the characteristics of the unemployed persons in the three-county area of the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area (WDA).

The study will attempt to provide information about the unemployed in the local area. This information includes:

- The skill sets unemployed workers possess.
- The historic underpinnings of the area's unemployment.
- The current industrial mix in the area.
- Some of the reasons unemployed workers may show a lack of interest in available jobs.
- Some common perceptions of the unemployed workers.

The Labor Market Information (LMI) Department is conducting this study as a pilot test with implication for being able to assess other localities experiencing unusual or unexpected employment situations.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study was the three-county area of the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area (Hardin, Jefferson, and Orange Counties). The region is also known as the Beaumont-Port Arthur Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), a designation from the Office of Management and Budget. The MSA designation is also used by economists and labor analysts to designate a substate region for which monthly economic data is produced. Locally, the area is known as the Golden Triangle.

The collaborative effort of LMI and the Southeast Texas WDB focused on the characteristics of the unemployed in this area, and the underlying causes for the historically high unemployment rate relative to other areas. Focus groups of local job seekers were used to study the perceptions the unemployed have of the economic situation as it pertains to job openings and job placement success. The focus groups also were intended to shed some light on the perceived barriers to work within the area.

Methods of Data Collection

The LMI Department analyzed Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) data, the Covered Employment and Wages data (CEW), Per Capita Income data, Population, Mass Layoff Statistics (MLS), poverty data, Unemployment Insurance (UI) Administrative records, and the Employment Security (ES) Job Applicant records to find the following:

- The historic trends in the labor force
- The industrial job mix in the area

- The current wage structure of the area
- The number of individuals that live in poverty
- The characteristics of the unemployed, short term and long term
- The skill sets the job applicants possess
- The skill sets the unemployed possess
- The desired occupations of the unemployed
- The minimum wage the unemployed desire to make
- The preferred jobs the unemployed wish to have
- The other factors that prevent the unemployed from accepting currently available job openings

An attempt was also made to link the unemployed to their O*NET-based Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA).

Goals of the Study

The primary goal of the study was to determine why jobseekers were not interested in accepting available jobs within the Golden Triangle. The study will show what the common characteristics were of the unemployed in the local area. The primary customer of this audit is the local Workforce Development Board (WDB), although the information presented may also potentially assist employers, job seekers, and the Texas Workforce Network.

It is anticipated that the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Board will benefit from this study by acquiring an in-depth understanding of the unemployed within the region. This knowledge will enable them to better tailor programs for both job seekers and employers in the area.

Executive Summary - Southeast Texas Community Audit

The Southeast Texas Community Audit was conducted in the three-county area known as the Golden Triangle (Hardin, Jefferson, and, Orange Counties). The number of employed residents in the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area (WDA) peaked at an annual average of 168,760 people in 1998 and has been on a decline through the end of 2001.

This area has a higher concentration of population age 55 and older than does Texas as a whole. The concentration of older workers in the Southeast Texas WDA may have some effects on the jobs that unemployed workers are willing to accept. For instance, younger employed workers may be more flexible in the type of work they will accept because they lack extensive experience in any particular field.

The Southeast Texas WDA is heavily dependent on the Construction, Manufacturing, and Local Government industries to bring in dollars from outside the area to fuel the local economy. The construction industry was the last industry of employment for nearly 38 percent of the individuals.

It appears major structural shifts have taken place in the area's economy. As this occurred, workers were displaced, and forced to seek employment in a different industry. This caused a real problem for the job seeker that did not have skills that were easily transferable from one industry to another.

Only two industries in Southeast Texas had an average weekly wage above the overall State average and they were Agriculture and Manufacturing, of which Manufacturing suffered substantial employment declines from 1990 to 2000.

Of 37 layoff events, the hardest hit industry was Construction with 21 confirmed layoffs that affected 3,130 individuals. The second largest number of layoffs came from the Manufacturing Industry with nine layoffs and 2,040 separations. With the Construction and Manufacturing industries comprising over 17 percent of the industrial base, these layoffs have far reaching impacts. While these are not the largest industries, they have been two of the higher paying industries.

In the Southeast Texas WDA, the top ten fastest growing occupations include Systems Analysts, Correctional Officers, Special Education Teachers, and Police Patrol Officers. The top six most sought after occupations were Cashier, Administrative Clerk, General Office Clerk, Laborer (warehouse worker), Construction Worker, and Welder.

Of the most sought after occupations, six of them (Cooks - both Fast Food and Restaurants, Welders, Constructions Workers, Heavy Truck Drivers, and Cashiers) were also found on the occupations that were projected to be growing the fastest within the area.

Cashier was the single most desired occupation. However, that occupation was the 12th lowest paying occupation with an average salary of \$6.69 per hour. Of 45,773 applicants, 1,596 listed Cashier as their last occupation. The second most listed occupation was Laborer (1,029), followed by Cook (758), Welder (714), and Helper (591).

The majority of the area's targeted occupations, 28 of 45 jobs (nearly 60 percent), require only some form of on-the-job training. While among the insured unemployed, 53 percent of them possessed at least a high school diploma or a GED.

The average desired wage by the insured unemployed was \$9.65. The median desired wage was \$8.00. With full time jobs, applicants were expecting \$9.63 per hour, yet part-time applicants were expecting only \$6.64 per hour.

Employers may be facing difficulties filling positions and coincidentally finding that the available labor pool does not fully possess the skills that they are seeking. Of those skills applicants listed as possessing, Cashiering was the skill named most often.

The three main things employees desire are to be treated fairly, to have employers operate out of care and concern for them, and to be trusted to do their job. Employees are more inclined to stay with an employer, even for lower wages, if their job satisfaction (as measured by the three most common intangible benefits) is high. This is not necessarily the case with job seekers that are unemployed. While these other qualities are also important, money becomes their bottom line.

Unemployed individuals are more willing to work for less pay, if they are able to secure a job, and if certain other intangible factors are satisfied. The inclusion of other benefits, both tangible and intangible, would help attract workers to certain jobs.

The underlying trend is for the majority of the job seekers to be males in their middle age (prime working years), and to have been unemployed for over five weeks. The majority of them had been working two or more jobs just to make ends meet. The occupational group that has the highest incidence of unemployment is structural work, with nearly 40 percent of all the unemployed citing this as their former occupation.

The applicants were asked to give two desired wages in a new job, one with benefits and one without. Without benefits, the average response was \$9.00 an hour, while with benefits it dropped to \$8.00 an hour.

The most common theme from the job seekers was that jobs were available, however, these jobs were not paying enough to make a living. Most of the reasons given for not taking a particular job centered on jobs at the lower end of the wage spectrum - the pay was not high enough, or the work conditions were not favorable.

The primary reasons for turning a job down also matched, with pay being the top response, followed by transportation and childcare. Working two part time jobs at

minimum wage does not allow a job seeker to make enough money to cover the costs of living (housing, utilities, food, etc) and pay for childcare.

Interviewed job seekers expressed the belief is that it is not what you know but whom you know if you want to get a job. One of the other most cited reasons was a lack of transportation, this response was given in every group. A close third to transportation was a lack of jobs.

The job seekers believe that there is no built-in incentive for employers to use the workforce system. Although it appears that approximately 10 percent of the local employers use the Workforce Centers in the Southeast Texas Board Area, an average higher than the Statewide norm.

In describing their desired job, the job seekers took a decided turn to other job factors, mainly job security and stability. The job seekers wanted to feel as though their employers respected them, that they were offered a chance to grow both personally and within the company. Several individuals even mentioned having educational opportunities so they could sharpen their skills and become a better employee for their employer.

The job seekers did not understand what a “Level 1,” “Level 2,” or “Level 3” client was, and the acronym “WIA” was just as confusing. The Center staff should avoid using jargon with them. The job seekers also suggested removing all required Monday meetings at the Centers for them, since this was a prime day for interviews and conducting job searches. They also wanted help to understand how they should dress for an interview and someone to explain the interpersonal skills that could help them land a job

Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area Background Information

Population and Area

The Southeast Texas (SETX) Workforce Development Area is comprised of three counties: Hardin, Jefferson, and Orange. Both Orange and Jefferson counties are located on the Texas-Louisiana border, with Jefferson having the Gulf of Mexico as its southernmost boundary. The three counties comprise 2,154 square miles and have a population density of about 179 persons per square mile, compared to the overall Texas population density of about 80 persons per square mile. The major cities within each county are within two hours driving time from Houston. The area contains over 385,000 people (Census 2000) and has grown by nearly 24,000 persons since 1990 (see Figure 1).

Hardin County grew faster than the either Jefferson or Orange Counties did. Overall, Texas grew by 3.8 million people, or 22.8 percent. The region's lower population growth may be tied to workers' perception of the local job market to some extent.

	1990 Census	2000 Census	Change	% Change
Hardin	41,320	48,073	6,753	16.3%
Jefferson	239,389	252,051	12,662	5.3%
Orange	80,509	84,966	4,457	5.5%
SETX	361,218	385,090	23,872	6.6%

Figure 1. Census 2000 Population data

The Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area's population is almost evenly split between males 192,015 (49.9 percent) and females 193,075 (50.1 percent) according to the 2000 Census. The median age for the counties is fairly close with Jefferson County at 35.3 years, Hardin County at 36.0 years, and Orange County at 36.1 years. The racial composition of the three counties is listed in Figure 2.

2000 Census Population Race	Jefferson County		Orange County		Hardin County	
	Number*	Percent	Number*	Percent	Number*	Percent
White	147,288	57.5	75,651	88.0	44,107	90.9
Black or African American	86,134	33.6	7,305	8.5	3,370	6.9
American Indian and Alaska Native	1,804	0.7	903	1.1	385	0.8
Asian	7,920	3.1	793	0.9	150	0.3
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	234	0.1	53	0.1	16	0.0
Some other race	12,713	5.0	1,293	1.5	506	1.0
* Number may exceed Total Population because individuals may report more than one race.						

Figure 2. Census 2000 Demographic Data

The 2000 Census did not consider Hispanic as a racial group but as an ethnic group. The number of Hispanics in Jefferson County was 26,536; Orange County, 3,073; and Hardin County, 1,223. The Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area has a higher concentration of African-American population when compared to Texas, but the Asian population is slightly less represented than in the State as a whole. Figure 3 displays the racial breakdown of the area.

2000 Census Population Race	Southeast Workforce Texas Area		Texas	
	Number*	Percent	Number*	Percent
White	267,046	68.4	15,240,387	71.3
Black or African American	96,809	24.8	2,493,057	11.7
American Indian and Alaska Native	3,092	0.8	215,599	1.0
Asian	8,863	2.3	644,193	3.0
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	303	0.1	29,094	0.1
Some other race	14,512	3.7	2,766,586	12.9

* Number may exceed Total Population because individuals may report more than one race.

Figure 3. Census 2000 Population by Race

Some of the major cities in the area include Beaumont, Port Arthur, Orange, Vidor, Bridge City, Lumberton, Silsbee, and Kountze. The most current city population from the 2000 Census is listed in the following figure with changes from the 1990 Census. The information indicates that people are moving from the larger cities in the region to more rural small towns.

	1990 Census	2000 Census	Change	% Change
Beaumont	114,323	113,866	-457	-0.4%
Port Arthur	58,551	57,755	-796	-1.4%
Orange	19,370	18,643	-727	-3.8%
Vidor	10,935	11,440	505	4.6%
Bridge City	8,010	8,651	641	8.0%
Lumberton	6,640	8,731	2,091	31.5%
Silsbee	6,368	6,393	25	0.4%
Kountze	2,067	2,115	48	2.3%

Figure 4. Population Change Between the 1990 and 2000 Census

The age of the population is an important factor in labor force analysis. Generally, the labor force is composed of persons sixteen years old and older due to work restrictions of Child Labor Laws. Figure 5 shows the population by age group for Texas, the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area and component counties from the 2000 Census.

Population by age 2000 Census					
	Texas	Southeast Texas WDA	Jefferson County	Orange County	Hardin County
Under 5 years	1,624,628	25,974	16,925	5,712	3,337
5 to 9 years	1,654,184	28,263	18,187	6,461	3,615
10 to 14 years	1,631,192	29,024	18,476	6,683	3,865
15 to 19 years	1,636,232	30,052	19,336	6,767	3,949
20 to 24 years	1,539,404	25,347	17,666	4,983	2,698
25 to 34 years	3,162,083	50,609	34,164	10,515	5,930
35 to 44 years	3,322,238	60,786	39,779	13,351	7,656
45 to 54 years	2,611,137	50,840	32,624	11,610	6,606
55 to 59 years	896,521	17,969	11,053	4,350	2,566
60 to 64 years	701,669	15,317	9,572	3,758	1,987
65 to 74 years	11,429,608	27,532	17,933	6,243	3,356
75 to 84 years	691,984	17,692	12,253	3,529	1,910
85 years and over	237,940	5,685	4,083	1,004	598
Total	31,138,820	385,090	252,051	84,966	48,073

Figure 5. 2000 Census Population by age

For comparison purposes, the percent distribution by age of the population for each geographic area is found in Figure 6. **The Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area has a higher concentration of population age 55 and older than does Texas as a whole.** This can have a negative impact on the labor force as workers retire and leave the job market. Sometime in the future, employers may have an increasingly difficult time recruiting workers to fill job openings with a shrinking pool of available labor. Orange and Hardin counties have a higher proportionate share of the younger population, under nineteen years old, than does Jefferson County. Jefferson County has the largest share of the 75-years-old and older population in the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area.

Population by age Percent Distribution					
2000 Census	Texas	Southeast Texas WDA	Jefferson County	Orange County	Hardin County
Under 5 years	7.8%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	6.9%
5 to 9 years	7.9%	7.3%	7.2%	7.6%	7.5%
10 to 14 years	7.8%	7.5%	7.3%	7.9%	8.0%
15 to 19 years	7.8%	7.8%	7.7%	8.0%	8.2%
20 to 24 years	7.4%	6.6%	7.0%	5.9%	5.6%
25 to 34 years	15.2%	13.1%	13.6%	12.4%	12.3%
35 to 44 years	15.9%	15.8%	15.8%	15.7%	15.9%
45 to 54 years	12.5%	13.2%	12.9%	13.7%	13.7%
55 to 59 years	4.3%	4.7%	4.4%	5.1%	5.3%
60 to 64 years	3.4%	4.0%	3.8%	4.4%	4.1%
65 to 74 years	5.5%	7.1%	7.1%	7.3%	7.0%
75 to 84 years	3.3%	4.6%	4.9%	4.2%	4.0%
85 years and over	1.1%	1.5%	1.6%	1.2%	1.2%
Total	99.9%	100.0%	100.0%	100.1%	99.7%

Figure 6. 2000 Census Population by age percent distribution

The population grew three times faster in Texas than in the Southeast Texas WDA between 1990 and 2000 according to Figure 7. The State population gained in each age group over the ten-year period while the three-county area lost population in the under-5 year old age group and 60-to-64 year old age group. The age group with the greatest percentage gain from 1990 to 2000 is 45-to-54 years old both for Texas and the Southeast Texas WDA as the "Baby Boomers" age.

The concentration of persons 45 and over in the Southeast Texas Area may have some effects on the jobs that unemployed workers are willing to accept. For instance, younger employed workers may be more flexible in the type of work they will accept because they lack extensive experience in any particular field. They may also be "hungrier" for work than an older worker who may have build up some reserves over his or her career. The older workers may have extensive experience that they feel they should be compensated for, and they may be reluctant to seek work outside of their traditional field of work. As an example, some who is trained as a pipefitter, and whose interest is in working in a plant or outside, may not be willing to accept work in an office environment.

Population by age 1990 to 2000								
	Texas				Southeast Texas WDA			
	1990	2000	Change	Percent	1990	2000	Change	Percent
Under 5 years	1,390,054	1,624,628	234,574	16.9%	26,399	25,974	-425	-1.6%
5 to 24 years	5,336,629	6,461,012	1,124,383	21.1%	107,241	112,686	5,445	5.1%
25 to 44 years	5,625,196	6,484,321	859,125	15.3%	108,909	111,395	2,486	2.3%
45 to 54 years	1,628,634	2,611,137	982,503	60.3%	36,793	50,840	14,047	38.2%
55 to 59 years	661,590	896,521	234,931	35.5%	16,852	17,969	1,117	6.6%
60 to 64 years	627,831	701,669	73,838	11.8%	17,798	15,317	-2,481	-13.9%
65 to 74 years	998,239	1,142,608	144,369	14.5%	27,832	27,532	-300	-1.1%
75 to 84 years	551,732	691,984	140,252	25.4%	15,128	17,692	2,564	16.9%
85 years and over	166,605	237,940	71,335	42.8%	4,274	5,685	1,411	33.0%
Total	16,986,510	20,851,820	3,865,310	22.8%	361,226	385,090	23,864	6.6%

Figure 7. Population by Age 1990 and 2000 Texas and the Southeast Texas WDA

Figures 8, 9 and 10 show population by age for Jefferson, Orange and Hardin counties for 1990 and 2000. The increases and decreases in population occur as people move from one area to another. This trend could have an impact on the labor market as the population is moving from larger cities to smaller cities and into the rural areas of the counties. It obviously impacts the size of the available local labor market. The more workers in the labor pool, the easier it will be for employers to find suitable workers.

Jefferson County Population by age				
	1990	2000	Change	Percent
Under 5 years	17,628	16,925	-703	-4.0%
5 to 24 years	69,832	73,665	3,833	5.5%
25 to 44 years	72,187	73,943	1,756	2.4%
45 to 54 years	22,986	32,624	9,638	41.9%
55 to 59 years	11,121	11,053	-68	-0.6%
60 to 64 years	12,009	9,572	-2,437	-20.3%
65 to 74 years	19,421	17,933	-1,488	-7.7%
75 to 84 years	10,963	12,253	1,290	11.8%
85 years and over	3,250	4,083	833	25.6%
Total	239,397	252,051	12,654	5.3%

Figure 8. Jefferson County Population by age 1990 and 2000

Orange County Population by age				
	1990	2000	Change	Percent
Under 5 years	5,793	5,712	-81	-1.4%
5 to 24 years	24,665	24,894	229	0.9%
25 to 44 years	24,380	23,866	-514	-2.1%
45 to 54 years	9,182	11,610	2,428	26.4%
55 to 59 years	3,850	4,350	500	13.0%
60 to 64 years	3,899	3,758	-141	-3.6%
65 to 74 years	5,547	6,243	696	12.5%
75 to 84 years	2,587	3,529	942	36.4%
85 years and over	606	1,004	398	65.7%
Total	80,509	84,966	4,457	5.5%

Figure 9. Orange County Population by age 1990 and 2000

Hardin County Population by age				
	1990	2000	Change	Percent
Under 5 years	2,978	3,337	359	12.1%
5 to 24 years	12,744	14,127	1,383	10.9%
25 to 44 years	12,342	13,586	1,244	10.1%
45 to 54 years	4,625	6,606	1,981	42.8%
55 to 59 years	1,881	2,566	685	36.4%
60 to 64 years	1,890	1,987	97	5.1%
65 to 74 years	2,864	3,356	492	17.2%
75 to 84 years	1,578	1,910	332	21.0%
85 years and over	418	598	180	43.1%
Total	41,320	48,073	6,753	16.3%

Figure 10. Hardin County Population by age 1990 and 2000

Poverty in the Region

According to the Health and Human Services Commission, there were approximately 64,600 individuals living below the poverty level in the Golden Triangle in 1999. In Texas, there were over 3.3 million individuals living in poverty during the same time period. Poverty was defined as

"A condition under which single individuals, or entire families, do not have sufficient economic resources, or money income, to pay for their basic needs. These needs include things such as food, housing/shelter, utilities, health care, transportation, and clothing, among others. In the United States, the Federal government establishes what is commonly known as the poverty line.

Moving down along the income scale, the poverty line represents the low-income level at which individuals and families begin to experience serious difficulties when attempting to meet, or pay for, their basic needs. The poverty line varies according to family size. Individuals and families whose incomes fall at or under

the poverty line are considered to be living in poverty. A family whose income exactly equals the established poverty line has an income that represents 100 percent of the poverty line. By the same token, a family whose income is lower than the established poverty line has an income that represents less than 100 percent of such line.

Each year the Federal Department of Health and Human Services revises the poverty line to account for changes in the cost of living, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), that occurred during the previous year. In addition, the Federal Department of Health and Human Services publishes a list containing National poverty income guidelines (a list of poverty lines that vary according to family size). For example, for a family of four, the poverty line for 1999 (based on annual income) is \$16,700, while for a family of three is \$13,880."

The distribution of poverty can also shed some light on the region. With the majority of the jobholders from the region between the ages of 24 and 55, a larger proportion of this age group should be above the poverty levels. Figure 11 shows the age distribution of poverty in the region and in Texas.

Area	Below Poverty all ages	Percent below all ages	Below Poverty under 18	Percent below under 18	Below Poverty 18-64	Percent below 18-64	Below Poverty 65 +	Percent below 65 +
Texas	3,307,787	16.5%	1,340,848	24.0%	1,645,548	13.3%	321,390	16.1%
Hardin	6,342	14.9%	2,148	19.4%	3,315	12.8%	843	15.2%
Jefferson	44,925	19.0%	18,169	29.6%	21,284	15.2%	5,472	15.9%
Orange	13,303	16.2%	4,853	22.1%	6,862	13.8%	1,587	15.1%

Figure 11. Poverty Levels in the Southeast Texas WDA, 1999

A quick glance at the chart shows that for the most part, the three counties do not vary greatly from the Texas averages, except for Jefferson County's population under the age of 18, where the percentage in Jefferson County is almost six percentage points higher than the Statewide average.

This points to a higher number of individuals living in households where the jobholders are working at less than living-wage levels for the family size. It also implies a lack of higher paying jobs available for this age bracket, which may be affected by many factors – including education. The majority of the individuals under age 18, and working, do not possess a high school diploma or a GED, and thus, do not have the same job opportunities that individuals with these credentials do. In addition, some in this age group were too young to work, or were the children of parents who live in poverty.

Labor Force Trends

The January 2002 unemployment rate for the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area was 7.8 percent with the three counties having unemployment rates of 6.9 percent in Hardin, 7.3 percent in Jefferson, and 9.6 percent in Orange County. The Texas

unemployment rate in January was 6.0 percent. Comparative labor force data for Texas, area counties, and selected area cities are listed in Figure 12.

Civilian Labor Force Estimates January 2002				
Area	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
Texas	10,577,391	9,937,961	639,430	6.0
Southeast Texas WDA	177,918	164,034	13,884	7.8
Jefferson County	113,993	105,626	8,367	7.3
Orange County	40,831	36,901	3,930	9.6
Hardin County	23,094	21,507	1,587	6.9
Beaumont	56,071	52,082	3,989	7.1
Port Arthur	24,961	22,045	2,916	11.7
Orange City	8,998	8,079	919	10.2
Vidor	5,594	5,057	437	8.0
Bridge City	4,090	3,372	358	8.8
Lumberton	4,243	4,062	181	4.3
Silsbee	3,461	3,185	276	8.0

Figure 12. Civilian Labor Force Estimates

Historically, the three county area's unemployment rate has been consistently higher than the Texas unemployment rate. The unemployment rate is the number of unemployed expressed as a percent of the labor force and gives a relative measure for economic distress in any given geographic area. The higher the unemployment rate, the more economic distress is present.

Comparative Unemployment Rates

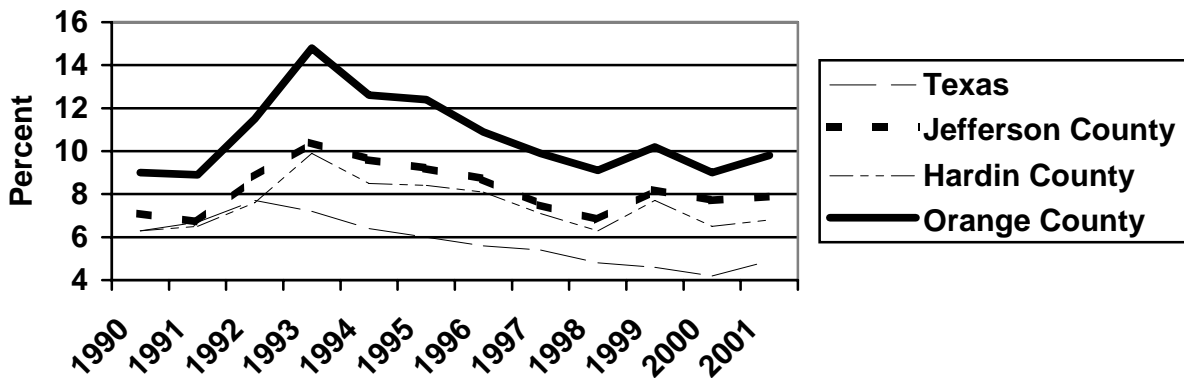


Figure 13. Comparative Unemployment Rates, Annual Averages

The labor force is the number of employed and number of unemployed added together. The Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area's labor force totaled an annual average of about 170,000 residents in 1990. By 2001, the labor force grew to an annual average of over 177,700 people. Most of the labor force expansion over the 11-year period came as a result of an increase of employed residents as the number of employed

residents grew by about 5,700. To be considered as employed, a resident must have worked for pay or worked fifteen hours or more as an unpaid worker in a family operated business. The number of employed residents in the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area peaked at an annual average of 168,760 people in 1998 and has been on a decline through the end of 2001.

The number of unemployed workers grew by almost 2,000 from 1990 to 2001. To be considered among the unemployed, a jobseeker must be able to work, available for work, and actively seeking work. A person who is not employed and not seeking work is not part of the labor force. The number of unemployed reached a high of about 21,100 people in 1993 and recorded an annual average unemployment rate of 11.4 percent during that year.

The unemployed in the labor force is a monthly measure of people that are out of work. In any given month, these people are not likely to be the same people that are unemployed in a later month of the same year. The labor force is very dynamic as different people find themselves unemployed and seeking employment services in the local community each month.

Industrial Mix - Employment

The Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area is heavily dependent on the Construction, Manufacturing, and Local Government industries to bring in dollars from outside the area to fuel the local economy. These industries comprise slightly more than one third of all the jobs in the three-county area. The industrial mix can be measured by the percent each industry contributes to the total employment level found in a geographic area.

Figure 14 displays the industrial mix of the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area with comparison data for the State of Texas. The Construction, Manufacturing, and Local Government industries are the only ones where there were a higher percentage of workers in the Southeast Texas WDA as compared to the State.

4th Quarter 2000 Industry Employment Composition				
Industry	Texas*	% of Total*	Southeast Texas WDA	% of Total*
Total	9,414,353	100.0%	157,369	100.0%
Agriculture	119,699	1.3%	927	0.6%
Mining	154,306	1.6%	908	0.6%
Construction	561,404	6.0%	17,795	11.3%
Manufacturing	1,088,750	11.6%	22,981	14.6%
Transportation & Public Util.	593,445	6.3%	7,734	4.9%
Trade	2,302,006	24.5%	36,682	23.3%
Fin., Insurance, & Real Est.	512,505	5.4%	5,052	3.2%
Services	2,516,757	26.7%	38,673	24.6%
State Government	322,567	3.4%	5,102	3.2%
Local Government	1,064,999	11.3%	18,789	11.9%
Federal Government	177,915	1.9%	2,726	1.7%

Figure 14. Industrial Composition of the Southeast Texas WDA

When a comparison of the industrial mix is made at the individual county level, some patterns start to show up on how the counties are interrelated as to business activity. A percentage less than the state concentration indicates that people go outside the county to obtain that particular activity. If the percentage is greater than Texas concentration,

4th Quarter 2000 Industry Employment Composition				
Industry	Texas*	% of Total*	Jefferson County	% of Total*
Total	9,414,353	100.0%	121,243	100.0%
Agriculture	119,699	1.3%	680	0.6%
Mining	154,306	1.6%	357	0.3%
Construction	561,404	6.0%	14,205	11.7%
Manufacturing	1,088,750	11.6%	15,776	13.0%
Transportation & Public Util.	593,445	6.3%	6,387	5.3%
Trade	2,302,006	24.5%	28,319	23.4%
Fin., Insurance, & Real Est.	512,505	5.4%	4,106	3.4%
Services	2,516,757	26.7%	31,826	26.2%
State Government	322,567	3.4%	4,609	3.8%
Local Government	1,064,999	11.3%	12,452	10.3%
Federal Government	177,915	1.9%	2,526	2.1%

Figure 15. Industrial Composition of Jefferson County

people travel to the county for that activity. While this is not true in all cases, it stands to reason that higher employment concentrations give an indication of where business activity is located. It is important to note that location of business activity is not necessarily a predictor of travel patterns to work.

State government and Federal government ratios in Jefferson County (Figure 15) exceed the Texas ratios. This is a reflection of the impact of the prison complex located in Jefferson County. Jefferson County is significantly higher than the State in Construction and Manufacturing employment. With a Construction employment percentage nearly twice that of the State, yet a slower population growth over the past ten years and a somewhat larger population under the poverty levels, one might question why is construction so large in Jefferson County.

4th Quarter 2000 Industry Employment Composition				
Industry	Texas*	% of Total*	Orange County	% of Total*
Total	9,414,353	100.0%	25,573	100.0%
Agriculture	119,699	1.3%	123	0.5%
Mining	154,306	1.6%	350	1.4%
Construction	561,404	6.0%	2,039	8.0%
Manufacturing	1,088,750	11.6%	6,021	23.5%
Transportation & Public Util.	593,445	6.3%	1,051	4.1%
Trade	2,302,006	24.5%	5,576	21.8%
Fin., Insurance, & Real Est.	512,505	5.4%	720	2.8%
Services	2,516,757	26.7%	5,096	19.9%
State Government	322,567	3.4%	370	1.4%
Local Government	1,064,999	11.3%	4,093	16.0%
Federal Government	177,915	1.9%	134	0.5%

Figure 16. Industrial Composition of Orange County

People in Orange County shop, bank, and seek services, such as medical services, outside their county as ratios for these groups are well below the Texas numbers. Yet the percentage of manufacturing workers is more than twice the Statewide level. This is due largely to the historical base of petroleum refining and chemical manufacturing in Orange County.

4 th Quarter 2000 Industry Employment Composition				
Industry	Texas*	% of Total*	Hardin County	% of Total*
Total	9,414,353	100.0%	10,553	100.0%
Agriculture	119,699	1.3%	124	1.2%
Mining	154,306	1.6%	201	1.9%
Construction	561,404	6.0%	1,551	14.7%
Manufacturing	1,088,750	11.6%	1,184	11.2%
Transportation & Public Util.	593,445	6.3%	296	2.8%
Trade	2,302,006	24.5%	2,787	26.4%
Fin., Insurance, & Real Est.	512,505	5.4%	226	2.1%
Services	2,516,757	26.7%	1,751	16.6%
State Government	322,567	3.4%	123	1.2%
Local Government	1,064,999	11.3%	2,244	21.3%
Federal Government	177,915	1.9%	66	0.6%

Figure 17. Industrial Composition of Hardin County

Hardin County is the only county in this workforce development area to exceed the Texas level of employment concentration in the Mining industry. Also, even though the Trade ratio is larger than that found at the state level, a large number of residents shop in Jefferson County, which has the only two malls in the region. In Hardin County, Construction was again at more than twice the Statewide ratio. While the County has seen a population migration from the larger cities in Jefferson and Orange Counties, is this enough to sustain a construction workforce that includes one out of every seven workers in the County? If it is a residential building boom, then what happens to the local workforce when the boom subsides?

While it is important to look at the type of industries found in an area, it is equally important to examine what has happened to industry employment over time. Figure 18 shows that industry employment in the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area has increased almost 18,000 jobs from the 4th quarter of 1990 to the 4th quarter of 2000. This represents a 12.6 percent job growth rate over this time period. If you worked in Mining, Manufacturing, or the Transportation, Communications and Public Utilities industries this job growth might represent something elusive to you.

The real story is found in looking at the industry employment shifts that have occurred since 1990. **It appears major structural shifts have taken place in this economy. As this happens, workers are displaced, and must often seek employment in a different industry. This can cause a real problem for the job seeker that does not have skills that are easily transferable from one industry to another.** Furthermore, a job search in a declining industry (such as Mining or Manufacturing) is difficult because the only jobs available are those that are replacement jobs for workers that have left due to retirement or other reasons.

A common misconception is that a declining industry offers no job opportunities for the job seeker. Declining industries do offer some job opportunities, but they will not sustain employment growth and they may not offer the greatest job benefits in terms of salary, schedules, leave time, and so forth. For people losing jobs in declining industries, the chances of returning to work at the same type of job are probably not very realistic. Their options then change to relocation or seeking a different kind of work. The different kind of work that is available may be radically different from what they were either trained for or have extensive experience in doing.

Industry Employment Change - Southeast Texas WDA				
Industry	4th Qtr. 1990	4th Qtr. 2000	Change	Percent Change
Total	139,757	157,369	17,612	12.6%
Agriculture	651	927	276	42.4%
Mining	1,883	908	-975	-51.8%
Construction	12,474	17,795	5,321	42.7%
Manufacturing	25,059	22,981	-2,078	-8.3%
Transportation & Public Util.	9,008	7,734	-1,274	-14.1%
Trade	32,567	36,682	4,115	12.6%
Fin., Insurance, & Real Est.	4,912	5,052	140	2.9%
Services	32,597	38,673	6,076	18.6%
State Government	3,572	5,102	1,530	42.8%
Local Government	15,685	18,789	3,104	19.8%
Federal Government	1,349	2,726	1,377	102.1%

Figure 18. Industrial Employment Change of the Southeast Texas WDA

Figures 19, 20, and 21 show industry employment over time for Jefferson, Orange, and Hardin counties. All three counties show significant industry shifts from 1990 to 2000. The trend is generally the same between counties with the magnitude of the changes varying by county. The bulk of the job growth in the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area occurred in Jefferson County over the ten year time period with 69 percent of the job gains.

Major industrial construction activity, towards the end of the decade at a petrochemical complex, accounted for about 30 percent of the job gains in Jefferson County from 1990 to 2000. Other areas of large job growth were in Business Services, Health Services and the Government sectors. Jefferson County, however, was not immune from job losses during the decade of the 1990s. Refineries and chemical plants shed jobs at all levels from engineers to management and production staff. Mergers and subsequent layoffs are reflected in the downturn in the Transportation and Public Utilities sector.

Industry Employment Change - Jefferson County				
Industry	4 th Qtr. 1990	4 th Qtr. 2000	Change	Percent Change
Total	109,098	121,243	12,145	11.1%
Agriculture	493	680	187	37.9%
Mining	1,278	357	-921	-72.1%
Construction	10,628	14,205	3,577	33.7%
Manufacturing	17,574	15,776	-1,798	-10.2%
Transportation & Public Util.	7,624	6,387	-1,237	-16.2%
Trade	25,493	28,319	2,826	11.1%
Fin., Insurance, & Real Est.	4,095	4,106	11	0.3%
Services	27,060	31,826	4,766	17.6%
State Government	3,098	4,609	1,511	48.8%
Local Government	10,584	12,452	1,868	17.6%
Federal Government	1,171	2,526	1,355	115.7%

Figure 19. Industrial Employment Change of Jefferson County

Orange County recorded the smallest overall job growth between 1990 and 2000 recording 11.9 percent of the total job gains in the Southeast Texas WDA. Construction employment grew in Heavy Construction and Special Trade Contractors with no one single project responsible for the added payrolls. The Trade sector expanded over the ten-year period as new restaurants hired workers. An expanding population created the need for additional jobs in Health Services and larger Services industry. **Job growth was partially offset by payroll losses in chemical plants, paper products manufacturing, and primary metal manufacturing.**

Industry Employment Change - Orange County				
Industry	4 th Qtr. 1990	4 th Qtr. 2000	Change	Percent Change
Total	23,472	25,573	2,101	9.0%
Agriculture	104	123	19	18.3%
Mining	187	350	163	87.2%
Construction	1,479	2,039	560	37.9%
Manufacturing	6,697	6,021	-676	-10.1%
Transportation & Public Util.	1,097	1,051	-46	-4.2%
Trade	5,059	5,576	517	10.2%
Fin., Insurance, & Real Est.	614	720	106	17.3%
Services	4,267	5,096	829	19.4%
State Government	362	370	8	2.2%
Local Government	3,488	4,093	605	17.3%
Federal Government	118	134	16	13.6%

Figure 20. Industrial Employment Change of Orange County

Hardin County logged almost 20 percent of the total job growth experienced in the Golden Triangle area between 1990 and 2000. While the other counties had job losses in Manufacturing, Hardin County added nearly 400 jobs in Manufacturing over the past ten years. Most of these new jobs were in Lumber and Wood Products manufacturing.

Construction, adding nearly 1,200 jobs, benefited from the petrochemical plants' change to a business practice of contracting out maintenance activity. The increased population in Hardin County from 1990 to 2000 caused most of the other industry sectors to rise. Job opportunities came as restaurants, health service companies, car dealers, and gasoline stations, to name a few businesses, opened during the 1990's. Companies that serviced oil and gas field activity trimmed jobs with reduced demand in the mining industry and changing regulations during the decade.

Industry Employment Change - Hardin County				
Industry	4 th Qtr. 1990	4 th Qtr. 2000	Change	Percent Change
Total	7,187	10,553	3,366	46.8%
Agriculture	54	124	70	129.6%
Mining	418	201	-217	-51.9%
Construction	367	1,551	1,184	322.6%
Manufacturing	788	1,184	396	50.3%
Transportation & Public Util.	287	296	9	3.1%
Trade	2,015	2,787	772	38.3%
Fin., Insurance, & Real Est.	203	226	23	11.3%
Services	1,270	1,751	481	37.9%
State Government	112	123	11	9.8%
Local Government	1,613	2,244	631	39.1%
Federal Government	60	66	6	10.0%

Figure 21. Industrial Employment Change of Hardin County

Employment Distribution: Small Versus Large Employers

Small employers, those that have fewer than 50 employees, constitute over 92 percent of the employers within the Golden Triangle. This figure is slightly lower than the state of Texas distribution of 94 percent. Even though these employers are the most numerous, they account for only about one-third of the employees within the area. The three-county area's small employers account for 33 percent of the jobs, which is slightly higher than the State average of 31 percent. Employers with over 50 jobs contribute over 72 percent of the wages paid to the jobs in the metro area. This is approximately two percentage-points lower than the state average.

The employment distribution seen in the Southeast Texas WDA is not uncommon. The majority of the business in the state are the small businesses, the so-called "mom and pop shops". In fact, the largest segment of employers in the area is employers with between one and four employees. This category accounts for 44 percent of all the employers in the area, however, it only contains four percent of the jobs. The figure is a little higher statewide with 47 percent of all employers having between one and four jobs, and accounting for five percent of the number of jobs.

This fact is important because small employers account for many of the new jobs created on an annual basis. According to the Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy, there is a widely cited claim that small businesses are the primary creators of jobs. The research was provided by David Birch and the U.S. Small Business Administration, who used 1980 data from Dun and Bradstreet (http://www.sba.gov/advo/stats/econ_arch/evol_pap.html#Innov).

Between 1996 and 2000, 36 percent of all new employers in the Southeast Texas WDA were small employers; those employing less than five employees. When the definition of

small is expanded to less than 100 employees, then nearly ninety-two percent of the new employers in the Southeast Texas WDA were small employers, and they accounted for over 59 percent of the job creation. This is in stark contrast to the figures for Texas as a whole. In Texas, over 95 percent of the new employers had less than 100 employees, yet these employers only accounted for 39 percent of the new jobs. The chart that follows compares the first quarter of 2000 data between Texas and the Southeast Texas WDA employment distribution.

Employment Interval	Texas			Southeast Texas WDA		
	Employers	Employment	Wages	Employers	Employment	Wages
0-4	55%	5%	4%	50%	5%	4%
5-9	18%	6%	4%	19%	6%	5%
10-19	12%	8%	6%	13%	8%	7%
20-49	9%	13%	11%	10%	14%	12%
50-99	3%	11%	10%	4%	13%	11%
100-249	2%	15%	15%	2%	17%	17%
250-499	1%	11%	11%	1%	12%	13%
500-999	0%	10%	10%	0%	12%	13%
1000 +	0%	23%	28%	0%	14%	18%

Figure 22. Employment Distribution for Texas and SETX, 2000 1st Quarter

Industrial Mix - Wages

Wages represent another important measure to examine to fully understand the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area economy. For this, a calculation of the average weekly wage by industry was computed. This process takes all wages and salaries paid by employers including bonuses, commissions and cash values or remuneration received in any medium other than cash and divides this total by all workers reported for broad industry groups. The comparison between Texas and the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area is presented in Figure 23.

Average Weekly Wages by Industry			
Industry	Texas	Southeast Texas WDA	Difference
Total	\$710	\$643	\$67
Agriculture	\$416	\$428	-\$12
Mining	\$1,533	\$741	\$792
Construction	\$740	\$601	\$140
Manufacturing	\$890	\$1,025	-\$135
Transportation & Public Util.	\$922	\$777	\$144
Trade	\$527	\$384	\$144
Fin., Insurance, & Real Est.	\$964	\$643	\$322
Services	\$719	\$699	\$21
State Government	\$597	\$577	\$20
Local Government	\$562	\$555	\$8
Federal Government	\$875	\$796	\$79

Figure 23. Average Weekly Wages

While it was once believed that employers in the Golden Triangle Area paid among the highest wages in the state, Figure 23 indicates only the Agriculture and Manufacturing industries pay wages that exceed the Texas averages by industry.

The average weekly wage for all industries in the Triangle Area has increased since 1990, as seen in Figure 24. The highest increase was recorded in the Agriculture industry at 62 percent and the lowest increase of 25 percent was noted in the Mining industry. A comparison with Texas shows that average weekly wages increased statewide greater than the average weekly wages for the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area for all industries except Agriculture.

Even though the Manufacturing wage in Southeast Texas remains higher than the State as a whole, it is important to remember that manufacturing employment is declining in the area and the percentage increase in the Statewide figure was larger than the increase for Southeast Texas. **In fact, only two industries in Southeast Texas had an average weekly wage above the overall State average and they were Agriculture and Manufacturing, of which Manufacturing suffered substantial employment declines from 1990 to 2000.**

Average Weekly Wages						
	Southeast Texas WDA			Texas		
	4th Qtr. 1990	4th Qtr. 2000	% Difference	4th Qtr. 1990	4th Qtr. 2000	% Difference
Total	\$469	\$643	37%	\$464	\$710	53%
Agriculture	\$264	\$428	62%	\$270	\$416	54%
Mining	\$592	\$741	25%	\$859	\$1,533	78%
Construction	\$456	\$601	32%	\$491	\$740	51%
Manufacturing	\$745	\$1,025	38%	\$573	\$890	55%
Transportation	\$605	\$777	29%	\$598	\$922	54%
Trade	\$270	\$384	42%	\$341	\$527	55%
FIRE	\$416	\$643	55%	\$546	\$964	77%
Services	\$455	\$699	54%	\$458	\$719	57%
State	\$423	\$577	36%	\$399	\$597	50%
Local	\$409	\$555	36%	\$405	\$562	39%
Federal	\$615	\$796	29%	\$604	\$875	45%

Figure 24. Average Weekly Wage Growth

The average weekly wage by industry for Hardin, Jefferson and Orange counties is listed in Figure 25. The most notable difference is found in the Manufacturing industry where companies in Jefferson and Orange counties pay significantly higher wages. The high average weekly wage found in the Services industry in Jefferson County can be explained by the larger concentration of Health Services employment in the county. The Statewide overall average weekly wage for this period was \$710.

	Hardin	Jefferson	Orange
Total	\$473	\$663	\$621
Agriculture	\$511	\$412	\$429
Mining	\$668	\$658	\$867
Construction	\$667	\$597	\$577
Manufacturing	\$671	\$1,038	\$1,062
Transportation & Public Util.	\$786	\$803	\$617
Trade	\$333	\$403	\$309
Fin., Insurance, & Real Est.	\$532	\$669	\$529
Services	\$322	\$744	\$544
State Government	\$590	\$580	\$527
Local Government	\$449	\$585	\$521
Federal Government	\$618	\$807	\$674

Figure 25. 4th Quarter 2000 Average Weekly Wages by County

Employment Declines: Mass Layoffs

Starting in the fourth quarter 1999 and ending with the third quarter of 2001, there have been 37 confirmed mass layoff events in the three-county area with over 6,500 confirmed employee separations. **Of these 37 layoff events, the hardest hit industry was Construction with 21 confirmed layoffs that affected 3,130 individuals. The second largest number of layoffs came from the Manufacturing Industry with nine layoffs and 2,040 separations.** During the same time period, the State of Texas experienced 740 layoff events with over 152,000 separations. Unlike in the Southeast Texas WDA, the industry with the most statewide layoffs was Manufacturing, followed by Services, then Construction. These three industries accounted for nearly 120,000 of the separations.

In the Southeast Texas WDA, the single most used reason for the layoffs was contract completion, with 25 layoffs and 3,840 separations stemming from these completions. Bankruptcy was the second most cited reason with 1,415 separations from three layoffs. Statewide, the top reason was also contract completion. Statewide, bankruptcy was the sixth most cited reason for the layoff.

With the Construction and Manufacturing industries comprising over 17 percent of the industrial base, these layoffs have far reaching impact. While these are not the largest industries, Trade, Services, and Government are all larger, they have been the higher paying industries. Therefore, layoffs in these industries tend to have an impact on the entire area - when the higher wage jobs are lost, all business suffer, from grocery stores to retail trade stores.

The nature of the layoffs also paints a picture. Contract completion denotes jobs that are short-term in nature. These types of jobs usually have either a seasonal pattern or some other type of cycle so that the workforce is not always being utilized at full capacity. When the workforce is not utilized at full capacity, the resulting slack places extra work on the Workforce Network. In addition to trying to fill job vacancies with individuals who are unemployed due to non-cyclical patterns, the Network must also handle these periodic influxes of new job seekers. **While many of these jobseekers will be back on temporary assignment in the near future, their short-term joblessness helps further exacerbate the current economy slowdown, and leads to the perception that the area always has a high unemployment rate.**

Educational Attainment of the Population

According to the 1990 Census (2000 Census data will not be available until mid-2002), nearly 70 percent of the population in Hardin county over the age of 25 had completed at least 12 years or more of school. Seventy-four percent of the population in Jefferson County and 73 percent in Orange shared this attribute.

1990 Census--25 years +	Hardin	Jefferson	Orange	Texas
Population over 25 years of age	25,629	152,608	50,076	10,310,065
Completing less than 9th grade	2,513	16,047	4,544	1,387,528
Completing 9th to 12th grade, no diploma	5,024	22,962	9,158	1,485,031
Completing 12 years or more	18,092	113,599	36,374	7,438,046
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	9,493	49,935	18,755	2,640,162
Some college or Assoc. degree	6,115	39,974	12,428	2,702,979
Bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree	2,484	23,690	5,191	2,094,905
% Not receiving high school degree	29.4%	25.6%	27.4%	27.9%

Figure 26. 1990 Census Educational Attainment for the Southeast Texas WDA

During the past two school years, the Texas Education Agency reported that around one percent of the of the high school students dropped out within the three-county area. Jefferson had the highest two-year average at 1.3%, followed by Orange at 0.7%, then Hardin at 0.7%. All three counties were below the Texas average of 1.6%

Employability Skills

In September 2001, the Center for Workforce Preparation published a report in which they interviewed 1,836 employers in the U.S. The results showed that over 34 percent of the employers stated that their applicants had poor employment skills, while 30 percent indicated that the applicants possessed the wrong skill sets. Given the employer perceptions, **having a well-trained workforce is paramount to bridging the gap between unemployed and employers job openings.**

When comparing data from the three-county area to Texas, a pattern can be seen. There was approximately the same percentage of individuals who did not receive at least a high school degree in the three counties as in the entire state. If area employers believe that the job seeker pool does not possess the basic employability skills, as many employers across the Nation feel, they may be inclined to raise their minimum standards in order to siphon off those candidates that will not meet their basic qualifications.

Coupled the employability skills notion is a perception among employers Nationwide that they are having a difficult time filling positions. In the same report, 68 percent of employers reported that they were having difficulties filling their job openings. **Employers then may be facing difficulties filling positions and finding that the available labor pool does not fully possess the skills that they are seeking.** Data specific to the Southeast Texas Workforce Area are examined later in this report in an analysis of the Employment Security and Unemployment Insurance records.

Education Does Pay

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Outlook 2000-2010, workers who have the most education generally have higher earnings and lower rates of unemployment. Even obtaining a high school diploma was far better than having no

formal education. In 2000, the unemployment rate for individuals with a Masters Degree was 1.6 percent while this group’s median earnings was \$55,300. On the other end of the spectrum was the group with some high school, but no diploma. This group exhibited an unemployment rate of 6.5 percent while their median earnings were only \$21,400, over two and one half times less than the Master Degree earners. High school graduates saw their unemployment drop to 3.5 percent while their earnings increased to \$28,800.

On the national level, the average job growth for all educational attainments is 15 percent, that means that all of the jobs taken in total will grow by 15 percent. The real distinction shows when the preferred educational attainments are placed next to these jobs. Individuals with an Associates Degree will find that the occupations that require this degree are the fastest growing segment between 2000 and 2010, growing at a 32 percent increase. The only segments that will grow slower than the average require either on the job training (short, medium, or long), or just some prior work experience.

Per Capita Personal Income

Per Capita personal income is the money received by households divided by the population of the area. This figure is a per person income number which is used to measure relative income from one area to another area. In 1999, Jefferson County had the highest Personal Per Capita Income for the three counties in the Golden Triangle at \$24,423, followed by Orange at \$21,886 and Hardin at \$20,990. These figures represent a two-percent or less increase from the 1998 levels and are low when compared to the United States and Texas income levels. The United States and Texas per capita personal income increased 4.2 percent and 4.0 percent respectively from 1998 to 1999. This means that income levels are growing much faster in the United States and Texas than in the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area.

Per Capita Personal Income				
	1998	1999	Change	Percent
United States	\$27,321	\$28,456	\$1,135	4.2%
Texas	\$25,793	\$26,834	\$1,041	4.0%
Southeast Texas WDA	\$23,229	\$23,395	\$166	0.7%
Jefferson County	\$24,307	\$24,423	\$116	0.5%
Orange County	\$21,688	\$21,886	\$198	0.9%
Hardin County	\$20,595	\$20,999	\$404	2.0%

Figure 27. Per Capital Personal Income.

During the 1990's, growth in the Per Capita Personal Income fluctuated yearly. Following the 1991 recession, the Southeast Texas area outperformed Texas by two to three percentage points of growth in Per Capita Income. However, during 1993, the region experienced a decline in Per Capita income while the state was growing. After the 1993 decline, Per Capita Income in the region started to grow, but was growing at slower rates than Texas, and the gap between the two widened. The recent slowdown in the Per Capita Income can be partially attributed to the national recession. In fact, prior to 1993, only Hardin County had experienced a decrease in Per Capita Income, in 1986 and 1987.

However, in 1993, Jefferson County's Per Capita Income dropped by \$379 a person, or 1.9 percent. This drop came on the heels of the last recession experienced by Texas.

Southeast Texas WDA's Projected Occupational Growth

In the Southeast Texas Workforce Area, the top ten fastest growing occupations include Systems Analysts, Correctional Officers, Special Education Teachers, and Police Patrol Officers. These occupations cross many educational levels from short-term on the job training, to Bachelor's degrees. The Top 25 fastest growing occupations can be found in Appendix A. It is important to note that the fastest growing occupations do not always represent those occupations that have the greatest potential for employment. The occupations that have the most openings are also those that usually employ the most workers. This is due to job replacement and new growth. It is estimated that for every new job that is created, three others need to be refilled due to job replacement (transfers to other occupations, retirements, or death).

Of the top ten occupations adding the most jobs, over 50 percent of them were also in the top twenty-five occupations with the most jobs. These occupations can offer the best potential for employment due to their large size, growth potential, and replacement needs.

Southeast Texas WDA Targeted Occupation List

Each year, the local Workforce Development Boards are required to produce a targeted occupation list. This list contains the occupations that the Board deems to have the best potential for job training funding because these occupations have either high growth potential, or wage levels consistent with the Board's desire for their clients.

When analyzing these targeted occupations, a few inferences can be drawn. The targeted occupations have preferred educational levels from work experience up to Bachelor's degrees. **The majority of the occupations, 28 of the 45 (nearly 60 percent) require only some form of on-the-job training.** Individuals seeking employment would potentially be able to find employment within this targeted list without a substantial increase in either education or training.

A second inference that can be made relates back to education and wages. The highest paying occupations require either a post-secondary degree or long-term training. The jobs on the lower end of the wage spectrum are those that are on the other end of the education spectrum, and many of these occupations are not considered high-skill occupations.

The Southeast Texas Workforce Boards Targeted Occupation list can be found in Appendix C. This list includes the Bureau of Labor Statistics Preferred Educational level classification, and the 2001 Occupational Employment Statistics wages.

Administrative Records Research

In order to have a better understanding of the dynamic forces at play in the region, the LMI Department researched the Texas Workforce Commission's administrative records on the Employment Security (ES) Job Applicants and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claimants within the three-county region. These records enabled LMI to find the common attributes of not only the claimant for unemployment, but also for the job seeker that has used the TWC Network resources for job placement.

Job Applicants - Employment Security Records

All of the information gathered from the job applicants was obtained from the Southeast Texas Workforce Centers Applicant Questionnaire or from the on-line version called Hire Texas (<https://m06hostp.twc.state.tx.us/jobmatch/jobseeker/Application.html>). The questionnaires are used by the centers to track the job applicants' work history, demographic data, type of assistance needed, and employment interests, including desired shifts, salary level, and job location. The data is used by the Texas Workforce Network to match job seekers to employer-provided job postings at the Centers.

There are four full service Texas Workforce offices and one mobile office located in the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area. Services offered include providing labor exchange services to helping employers find workers and job seekers find jobs. The Centers also coordinate training for eligible individuals, including activities such as occupational skills training, on-the-job training, work experience, GED preparation, and support for childcare and transportation. Veterans may receive specialized services, such as counseling, job-search assistance, referral, and placement. Customers may find labor market information as well as information on training available from a variety of providers, such as local trade and technical schools and community colleges. Also, information about special employment services for senior Texans, who are 55 and older, is available at these local workforce offices.

A person does not need to be unemployed to use the Centers or the job matching system. However, all unemployed persons must be registered within the system to continue receiving unemployment benefits. Within the Southeast Texas Workforce Area, nearly 100 percent of the job seekers are from the ranks of the unemployed, however, a few individuals who are not unemployed have registered with the Centers.

The system works based upon keyword matching. The job seeker supplies a list of keywords, a description of the keyword, and the number of months experience they have with that keyword. The systems will then match job postings with those job seekers that have the required keywords. Job seekers are mailed a postcard informing them about potential skill matches from the job bank. After receiving the postcard, the job seeker calls the Workforce Center to receive more information about the posting.

The data analyzed for the study covered the time period from November 1, 1999 to October 31, 2001. **During this time period, there were 45,773 unique job applications placed on file with the three-county area.** In Texas, there were 530,039

applicants on December 31, 2001, and of these, 412,311 were eligible Unemployment Insurance claimants.

Applicant Demographics - Race and Gender

The demographic distribution of the job applicants showed that 25,100 were males and 20,700 were females. There was a monthly average of 1,050 males and 870 females using the job matching system during this time period. For both genders, September 2000 was the month with the lowest number of active applicants. May 2001 was the most active month for males, and January 2001 was for females. May data comes on the heels of the beginning of the current economic recession, so this actually is not a surprise or a mystery. Figure 28 depicts the county totals with the gender distribution.

	Hardin	Jefferson	Orange	Total
Males	2,508	16,656	5,927	25,091
Females	2,297	14,058	4,327	20,682
Total	4,805	30,714	10,254	45,773

Figure 28. Job Applicants by County, November 1999 to November 2001

The 21-to-30 year olds accounted for 32 percent of all applications, followed by the 31-to-40 year olds with 24 percent. Tied for third place were teenagers and 41-to-50 year olds with 18 percent each.

Fifty-four percent of all applicants were white, 34 percent were black, and seven percent were Hispanic. In Hardin County, 83 percent of the applicants were white, 12 percent black, and two percent Hispanic. Orange County followed essentially the same breakdown as Hardin County with 80 percent of the applicants being white, 12 percent black, and three percent Hispanic. The trend was reversed in Jefferson County, where black applicants made up 44 percent of the total, whites 41 percent, and Hispanics nine percent.

Applicant Demographics - Education

Applicants are also asked to list their highest grade of education completed. They have the option to select from the individual elementary grades up to and including high school or GED as well as doctoral degree. No attempt is made to confirm these applicant-supplied selections.

With the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area, 24,368 individuals, or 53 percent have completed at least 12 years of education or completed their GED. This is substantially above the general population's 37 percent completion rate (see Figure 26). Approximately 21 percent have not finished high school nor achieved their GED. Over 26 percent of the individuals have furthered their education beyond the 12th grade level. Only 21 percent of the job seekers had not finished high school, while over 26 percent of the area's total population had not done so. When compared back to the data in Figure 26, **the job seekers have a higher level of education than the area's population overall.**

Desired Wages

Of the 45,773 applicants, 38,045 listed a desired wage on their application, while 7,747 did not enter a desired wage. The average desired hourly wage was listed at \$9.64.

To get a better feel for the economic situation, the wages were cleansed by dropping all of those wages that fell below the Federal Minimum Wage for wait staff of \$2.13 (which has subsequently been raised to \$2.26). This edit left 38,026 desired wages with **the average at \$9.65**. Under both methods, **the median wage was \$8.00**. The median wage is the midpoint; one-half of the wages are above this level, and one-half of the wages are below this level. The higher average wage denotes that a few of the upper end wages are skewing the mean to some degree in relation to the median.

The mode measures the most common number in a string. **Among Southeast Texas applicants the mode was \$5.15, which is the Federal Minimum Wage.** Nearly 13 percent of all of the desired wages were listed at \$5.15. For more information on the Federal Minimum Wage, please see the following (<http://www.dol.gov/dol/esa/public/minwage/main.htm>).

Education and Wages

With increased education usually follows higher wages. In the Golden Triangle, that adage also holds true. In order to verify that statement, a cross-tabulation between wages and education was produced. Based upon the 38,026 job applicants who had a desired wage listed, the majority of them (nearly 50 percent) have completed high school and their average wage sought was \$9.38 per hour. With each increase in education, the wages increased. The only educational level that bucked this trend was the Doctorate level, and this may be due to outliers in the data. With just a little increase in education, from high school to some college, the desired wage went up \$.04 per hour. However, with the completion of a two or four-year program, there was an increase in the desired salary of between \$1.50 and \$5.00.

An individual who had at least an Associate degree was expecting to receive about \$1.69 per hour more than a high school graduate did. When that individual acquired a bachelor's degree, the salary expectation increased to \$12.55, over \$3.00 more per hour than the high school graduate.

Does it pay to stay in high school? According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Outlook 2000 to 2010, the answer is "yes." With each level increase in education came a corresponding decrease in the unemployment rate coupled with an increase in the median wage. In the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area the answer is also "yes." Individuals who earned their GED sought an average of \$7.07 an hour, \$2.31 less than the high school graduate did. Even though the GED is equivalent to a high school diploma, it is still wiser to stay in school and earn that diploma.

A few interesting items appear when analyzing the educational and wage data. There appears to be a correlation between the educational level of job seekers and their desired wage, however, this correlation has two distinct modes. **For those individuals who have less than a junior high school education, the average desired wage is greater than**

those who possess either a high school education or just some high school classes. This could be due to unrealistic expectations. Once the individual enters or graduates from high school, the desired wage continues to rise with each successive year of education. Applicants with GED's appear to desire less per hour than high school graduates do, thus further reinforcing the notion for individuals to stay in high school. **It may be assumed that individuals with higher levels of education have a more realistic outlook on their wage demands.**

For the complete breakdown on education and wages, see Appendix G.

Desired Hours and Shifts

Applicants are also given the opportunity to select the type of work they are seeking. They can select from full or part time, or list either as their choice. Some 12,580 individuals listed full time as their desired schedule, with only 786 listing part-time as their preferred choice. A rotating schedule was favored by 638 individuals, while 122 selected split shifts.

The most preferred shift of the job applicants was the first shift, with 49 percent listing that as their primary and only choice. Only 2 percent of the applicants listed the second shift as their only choice, while 1 percent listed the third shift. There were only 1,614 individuals who listed the first or the second shift as their only choice, and 15,304 listed any shift. The pattern from the shift analysis shows that while most people would prefer the first shift, a large portion (33 percent) would take any shift.

The desired work schedule (full or part time) also had a reflection in the desired wage. **With the full time jobs, applicants were expecting \$9.63 per hour, yet part-time applicants were expecting only \$6.64 per hour.**

Does the desired work shift have an impact on wages? The answer to this question is a little bit murkier. It would seem that with shift differentials, salary expectations would go up. However, the data does not reflect this trend. The overwhelming majority of individuals who listed both a desired wage and a desired work shift selected the first shift only as their primary option. This group, numbering 20,042 strong, wanted a wage of \$10.20 per hour, while the 949 individuals who wanted the second shift only were seeking \$7.17 per hour. The 355 third shift seekers were only looking for a wage of \$7.68 per hour, slightly higher than the second shift seekers. When you look at the individuals who were willing to work any shift, the salary expectations level out at \$9.53 per hour, very near the entire groups average desired hourly wage. Appendix H contains the data for the desired wages and work schedules.

Applicant Work History

The top six most sought after occupations during the 24-month time period were Cashier I (2,754), Administrative Clerk (alternate title Clerk), General Office Clerk (1,642), Laborer - Stores, (alternate title Warehouse Worker) (1,642), Construction Worker II (1,229), and Combination Welder (764). These occupations accounted for 18 percent of all of the desired occupations in the area. If you expand to the top 20

occupations, this list then encompasses over one-third of all of the sought after occupations. Over 14 percent of the job seekers did not have a desired occupation listed. The top 20 most sought after occupations are listed in Appendix D.

Of the most sought after occupations, six of them (Cooks - both Fast Food and Restaurants, Welders, Constructions workers, Heavy Truck Drivers, and Cashiers) were also found on the occupations that were projected to be growing the fastest within the area. In addition, nine of the occupations were also found on the occupations projected to add the most jobs. These occupations included Retail Salespersons, General Office Clerks, Fast Food Cooks, Nursing Aides, Heavy Truck Drivers, Welders, Construction Workers, Restaurant Cooks, and Cleaners. The Cashier Occupation is expected to grow at a ten-year rate of 17.2% while adding 750 jobs during this time period.

Appendix F displays the top 25 occupations within the Southeast Texas WDA and their annual projected openings, broken down by growth and replacement needs. These occupations mirror closely to the list of the fastest growing occupations and the occupations adding the most jobs.

Of the 45,773 applicants, 1,596 listed a cashier as their last occupation. The second most listed occupation was Laborer (1,029) followed by Cook (758), Welder (714), and Helper (591). The top 20 occupations listed as the last job account for over 71 percent of all of the last jobs held. Appendix E contains the top 20 last occupations held by the job seekers.

Applicants Wage Expectations and Current Occupational Wages

How do the wage expectations of the job seekers compare to the current hourly wages offered by employers? Also, what do the skill sets pay? To answer these questions, data from the 2001 Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Survey was cross-referenced to the applicant skills and desired occupations. The data from the OES survey was collected from employers in the Golden Triangle area during the last half of 2000 and the first half of 2001. These employers supplied information on the number of occupations that they had and the wages they paid to the workers in those occupations.

How do expectations compare to reality? **Of the top five most sought after occupations, a Cashier was the most desired, however, that occupation was the 12th lowest paying occupation with an average salary of \$6.69 per hour.** Welders fared better, with an average wage of \$14.45 per hour. Construction laborers made \$8.43, while Laborers made \$8.71. Clerks are much more difficult to track for several different types are in the data. The lowest paying clerk position was a File Clerk, and this occupation made \$7.67 per hour.

How do the survey averages compare to the desired wages? All of the desired occupations and the desired wages from the applications were matched to the OES data. Only those records that had listed a desired wage and a desired occupation were used. **Of the top 10 desired occupations, a Cook and a Cashier were the only two occupations**

in which the desired wage was below the average wage reported by employers.
 Some of this difference may be due to the different coding schemes used in both systems.
 The following table displays the top 10 occupations.

	Number	Total Wages	Average Desired Wage	OES Wage
Admin Clerk (Gen. Office)	1,539	\$12,263.95	\$7.97	\$9.26
Cook	602	\$6,651.05	\$11.05	\$7.68
Housecleaner	459	\$2,683.28	\$5.85	\$6.21
Nurse Aide	632	\$4,302.96	\$6.81	\$7.12
Welder	718	\$8,538.96	\$11.89	\$14.15
Carpenter	635	\$6,873.16	\$10.82	\$14.60
Pipe Fitter	594	\$8,099.10	\$13.63	\$19.38
Construction Worker II	1,111	\$8,246.39	\$7.42	\$8.43
Warehouse Worker	1,403	\$11,583.73	\$8.26	\$8.71
Cashier	2,513	\$17,190.17	\$6.84	\$6.69

Figure 29. Desired Wages Versus Average Wages

Figure 29 shows the applicant supplied data on the number of individuals who were seeking specific occupations, the total wages desired by these applicants, and the average desired wage (total divided by number of individuals). When we look back at the desired wages, a clear, yet logical, mismatch appears. The average desired wage for all occupations was \$9.65 an hour. This figure was below the \$13.88 an hour average for all occupations in the OES survey. It is reasonable to expect job seekers to be willing to take jobs at a lower per hour wage when you combine their job search status with their current unemployed status.

In addition, only two of the top ten desired occupations listed in Figure 29 pay above the OES wage for that occupation. This lends further credence to the thought that **unemployed individuals are more willing to work for less pay, if they are able to secure a job.** See Appendix J for the Top 25 paying Occupations and Appendix K for the 25 Lowest Paying Occupations.

Applicant Experience

Job applicants have the ability to list up to 14 different types of occupational skills and the amount of experience they have using this skill. These skills are then matched against job orders placed by employers using the Workforce Network for their job postings. Applicants receive notice from the Workforce Centers when their skill sets match an employer posted job. The skill sets are from the following occupational clusters:

- Scientific / Technical
- Computer Administration / Programming
- Professional / Managerial
- Sales
- Clerical / Bookkeeping
- Services
- Agriculture / Forestry / Fishing

Manufacturing
Construction
Transportation

Under each of the occupational clusters are listed several different types of specific occupations and their corresponding occupational skills. After selecting the skill, the individual is able to enter the months of experience they have with that skill, up to 99 months.

Not every individual entered information on their skill sets. In fact, 3,075 (nearly seven percent of all applicants) chose not to enter any skill information. On the opposite end of the spectrum, 9,862 individuals took full advantage of the 14 skills and listed a complete set of them with their application.

There were 2,404 total skills entered by the applicants and this accounted for 357,915 individual supplied skills. **Of these skills, 8,295 applicants listed Cashiering work as one of their skills, making that the highest selected skill.** General Clerical work came in second with 5,606 individuals listing this skill, followed by Personal Computing (5,148), Construction Labor work (4,932) and rounding out the top five was Money Handling with 4,678.

When the experience is factored into the equation, the skill listed the most is a Supervisor, with 1,092 individuals listing this skill with 99 months of experience. General Clerical Work comes in second with 1,067, followed by Personal Computing Work (1,021), Construction Laborer Work (917), and Forklift Trucks with 916 individuals. Appendix I has the top 30 occupational skills from the three-county region. The top 30 skills were listed 98,415 times, over 27 percent of the total number of skills listed.

Other Potential Concerns

While the applicant data provides a wealth of information on the tangibles of what job seekers are looking for (i.e. pay, benefits, shifts, etc.), it does not allow for the intangible items potential employees want. According to a study in 2001 by Walker Information, **the three main things employees desire are to be treated fairly, to have employers operate out of care and concern for them, and to be trusted to do their job.**

The report further detailed that employee's job performance was directly tied to their commitment to the employer. The implications are tremendous - **employees are more inclined to stay with an employer, even for lower wages, if their job satisfaction (as measured by the three most common intangible benefits) is high.** In a report from Watson Wyatt in March 2001, it was found **that employees younger than 30 reported the opportunity for skills development was more important than money when staying with an employer.** Yet again we see that with employees, money is not the prime motivating factor. **This is not the case with job seekers who are unemployed. Money becomes their bottom line,** however, these other qualities are also important. While the applicant data will not show these qualities, they will be explored in the section of this report that covers the job seeker focus groups.

Unemployed Persons - Unemployment Insurance Records

Data from November 2001 reflected a total of 3,310 insured unemployed in the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area. Of this total, 1,353 or 41 percent were minorities. This compared to the Texas total of 141,684 with 77,831 (55 percent) minorities. Males accounted for 68 percent of the total with 38 percent of the males listed as minorities. The greatest numbers of the insured unemployed were between 22 and 54 years of age, with over 2,700 individuals from this age group.

The following chart depicts the characteristics of the insured unemployed and their industry attachment, sex, age, and duration of unemployment. **The underlying trend is for the majority of the individuals to be males in their middle age (prime working years), and having been unemployed for over 5 weeks.** The long-term unemployed in the region have longer bouts of unemployment, when compared to Texas. A significant number of individuals, almost 40 percent, have been unemployed for longer than 15 weeks. This ratio is slightly higher than the Texas ratio of 35 percent.

Industry	Total	Gender		Age			Weeks of Duration		
		Male	Female	16-21	22-54	55+	1-4	5-14	15+
Mining	33	28	5	1	31	1	7	16	10
Const.	1,245	1,103	142	49	1047	149	115	623	507
MFG.	504	431	73	17	402	85	80	175	249
Chem.	84	65	19	0	45	39	37	9	38
Fab. Metals	135	125	10	6	116	13	24	58	53
Trans. Eq.	158	145	13	5	131	22	7	54	97
Pub. Util	143	103	40	1	122	20	18	72	53
Trade	408	185	223	39	311	58	55	202	151
FIRE	59	20	39	2	48	9	7	30	22
Services	836	351	485	33	706	97	95	459	282
Other	64	36	28	1	55	8	6	40	18
Total	3,310	2,259	1,051	143	2,740	427	387	1,624	1,299

Figure 30. Characteristics of the Insured Unemployed by industry, sex, age, and duration

Skill Sets

Looking at industrial data alone does not give the full picture of the Golden Triangle. Industries are composed of jobs, and jobs are classified according to the type of work, or occupation. Therefore, by examining the occupational distribution of the insured unemployed, the skill sets of the job seeking pool can be analyzed. For example, a secretary possesses the following skills; active listening, reading comprehension, writing, speaking, information gathering and time management to name a few. However, these skills are not limited to a secretary only. By using O*Net (<http://online.onetcenter.org/>), individuals are able to see what occupations their skill sets can translate to.

In the secretary example, the following occupations also have similar knowledge, skill, and abilities as secretaries do; general office clerks, legal secretaries, insurance claims clerks, and tellers, just to name a few. By viewing an occupation as a set of knowledge,

skills, and abilities, potential job seekers can find a variety of jobs they may not have considered.

Figure 31 displays the occupational distribution of the insured unemployed in the Golden Triangle.

Occupation	Total	Gender		Weeks of Duration		
		Male	Female	1-4	5-14	15+
Prof/Tech/Mgr	55	46	9	27	18	10
Clerical	355	70	285	44	182	129
Sales	112	60	52	15	55	42
Domestic	23	6	17	0	13	10
Service excl. domestic	441	181	260	60	228	153
Farm/Fish	16	15	1	2	9	5
Processing	35	30	5	0	18	17
Machine Trades	176	163	13	11	85	80
Benchwork	75	62	13	9	32	34
Structural	1,268	1,197	71	126	615	527
Miscellaneous	193	160	33	26	99	68
Total	3,310	2,259	1,051	387	1,624	1,299
Minority	1,353	869	484	135	679	539

Figure 31. Characteristics of the Insured Unemployed by occupation, sex, age, and duration

The occupational group that has the highest incidence of unemployment is structural work, with nearly forty percent of all the unemployed having this as their former occupation. Included in this category are the construction crafts like welders, carpenters, and pipe fitters. This is also by far the largest male dominated occupational category, with a high level of insured unemployed.

The next two highest unemployed occupational categories were services (excluding domestic - this would include waiters and waitresses, security guards, and cosmetologists) and secretarial. Whereas structural work is male dominated, these occupations are female dominated with over 80 percent of the unemployed secretaries being female and nearly 60 percent of the former services occupation workers being female.

Because industries are made up of occupations, the same duration of unemployment is found in Figures 30 and 31 - the majority of the individuals have been unemployed for 5 weeks or longer.

Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area Focus Groups

The third component of the Community Audit was conducting focus groups with unemployed individuals from the Southeast Texas Workforce Area. The Southeast Texas Workforce Development Board randomly selected these individuals from the unemployed registered in the local Workforce Center. The four offices located in

Beaumont, Orange, Port Arthur, and Silsbee were used for the focus groups. Each office had a minimum of two focus groups with the Beaumont and Port Arthur offices having three groups.

The LMI Department conducted the focus group sessions during January 2002. The focus groups were limited to eight individuals who were asked questions about their employment history, job search activities, and future job considerations.

The LMI staff interviewed sixty-five participants in ten focus group sessions. In Silsbee, fifteen of the sixteen participants showed up. In Beaumont, that figured dropped to thirteen of the twenty-four. Sixteen participants showed up in Orange, and in Port Arthur, twenty-two of the twenty-four participants showed up.

In order to ensure confidentiality, no demographic data was collected from the participants, however, the groups were racially and ethnically diverse, and covered a broad spectrum of age brackets.

The LMI staff used the questions to guide and start the focus group. There was no effort made to ensure statistically significant results. Rather, the goal was to elicit job seeker feedback, to find out what their experiences have been. To this end, the questions were a guide and the proposed responses were only used to help stimulate the thinking process. Each question asked will be explored in the following sections. When possible, tabulation results will be given.

The quotes and comments used are the job seekers' only and do not reflect the opinions of the facilitators or the LMI Department.

Job Seeker Backgrounds

The 65 job seekers interviewed came from a variety of backgrounds. There were recent high school graduates, retired military, natives, transplants, male, female, young, and old. Their work backgrounds were just as diverse. Several of them were last working as truck drivers, a few corrections officers, Licensed Vocational Nurses, telemarketers, bartenders, cashiers, real estate agents, welders, and day care workers. There were people with former high paying jobs and low paying jobs.

Most of the individuals had been on the unemployment rolls for less than 1 year, with the majority of them having been out of work for less than 6 months. Many of them had been working full time. **The majority of them had been working two or more jobs just to make ends meet.** Some had been working multiple jobs just so they could get more paying hours. Whatever their individual circumstance, money seemed to be the overwhelming driving factor behind their responses.

When asked how far they would be willing to drive for a job, the answer was always "it depends on the money." If the wage offered was high enough, they were willing to drive a long distance. When they were asked to use their last job as a reference, then **the average distance fell between 20 and 30 miles, or roughly the distance from Silsbee**

to Beaumont, or from Port Arthur to Orange. Again, with a high enough wage, they were willing to commute farther.

The majority of the job seekers have searched for jobs prior to their current situation. Many of them said that they had looked for jobs in the past while employed. They mentioned that they were always on the look out for something better, and that better pay was the main reason for looking. They were also looking for benefits or more hours.

Job Seeker Perceptions of the Local Labor Market

Throughout the four offices, the general perception was that the Golden Triangle area's economy is depressed and has been for a long while. The overall comments ranged from a lack of jobs (in Silsbee), to low paying wages throughout the area.

One of the most repeated comments was the mismatch between the skills employers wanted and the wages they were willing to pay for those skills. The jobseekers thought that they were being asked to work at a higher skill level than the one the employer was willing to pay for.

One of the questions posed to the job seekers attempted to find out what the living wage was in the Golden Triangle. The individuals were asked what is the lowest wage that they would work for and still cover the basics of living. They were asked to give two wages, one with benefits and one without. **Without benefits, the average response was \$9.00 an hour, while with benefits it dropped to \$8.00 an hour.**

The answers from the job seekers give valuable insight on the thoughts and feelings of the unemployed in the area.

From the job seeker feedback, several conclusions can be drawn about the local labor market.

1. There appears to be a fundamental mismatch between the skills the job seekers possess and the skills the employers are looking for.
2. The common perception is that employers are not willing to pay wages commensurate with their required work requirements.
3. The basic wage requirement of the job seekers is between \$8.00 and \$9.00 per hour, depending on benefits.
4. There are perceived barriers to employment, ranging from racial and gender bias, to a lack of knowledge about where the job openings exist.
5. The job seekers believe that there is a lack of jobs available in the area, except for temporary help jobs.

Job Seeker perceptions of High Unemployment and Unfilled Jobs

The job seekers were asked for their opinion regarding the difficulty employers had filling jobs when the unemployment rate was relatively high. We wanted to see if the job seekers shared the same concerns that the employers did; employers have publicly expressed their concern about unfilled job openings during a period of relatively high unemployment.

The responses from the perceptions of the economy led directly into this question. If the job seekers thought the area had jobs, which they did, they had opinions as to why there were unfilled jobs. Many of the items mentioned in the local economy overview also appeared in this section. **The most common theme from the job seekers was that jobs were available, however, these jobs were not paying enough to make a living.** Many individuals reiterated that employers were seeking individuals with very high skill levels, yet they were unwilling to compensate these people accordingly.

The responses for this question did not have a large geographic dispersion; it did not matter where the individual lived or worked, the answers were the same. Several individuals also mentioned that a lot of people could not fill jobs because the **potential job seekers cannot pass a drug test.**

A few individuals also mentioned that **the only jobs they see posted on a daily basis are the telemarketing jobs.** They do not see these jobs as an option because the working conditions are tough and very stressful, and the wages are low. Even with the benefits that were offered, it was still necessary to take on additional jobs in order to make ends meet.

Job Seeker Perceptions on Jobs They Would Not Accept

The responses to this question varied by a great degree. **Most of the reasons given for not taking a particular job centered on jobs at the lower end of the wage spectrum - the pay was not high enough, or the work conditions were not favorable.** There were a few responses that ran contrary to the common theme, and these responses seemed to be outliers in the true sense.

Most of the occupations listed by the job seekers as jobs they would not take were centered on the service sector. We received several responses that listed fast food and telemarketing as the primary job they would not work. A few individuals mentioned that they would work in these positions, however, they would have to be very needy. The other occupations listed included grocery store workers, door-to-door sales, cleaners, corrections officers, and cosmetologists.

The primary reason given for not taking a job was pay. **Nearly every job seeker mentioned pay as the primary factor for job consideration.** A close second was a lack of hours worked, or not being offered enough hours, which also tied into pay. If they were offered enough hours, then the pay became the second issue. Working conditions and personal safety were the other reasons listed why job seekers would not take a position.

These results run contrary to the findings from the Center for Workforce Preparation report. In that report, the reasons for turnover were measured. While turnover does not directly relate to job refusal, a similar pattern can be drawn. A person may leave a job due to the same reasons they would not consider one. In that report, pay was not the

prime reason for leaving a job. Rather, a better job opportunity was listed. Pay was the second most important reason followed by moving.

When these reasons are coupled with the findings from Watson Wyatt and the Walker Information Global Network reports, a clearer pattern evolves. While pay is an important issue for both job seekers and current employees, it is not the most important item in job decisions. **Individuals are willing to work for less money if certain other intangible factors are satisfied.** The inclusion of other benefits, both tangible and intangible, would probably help.

In essence, the jobseekers describe a cycle. People leave jobs for more money, the jobs they leave become increasingly harder to fill. The pool of available workers willing to accept the job decreases a little more. The employers attempt to use alternative methods to fill these openings. But the workers keep churning through the jobs. While this pattern may not hold true for all jobs, it does potentially hold for jobs on the lower end of the skill spectrum.

The current job seeker perception is that employers stop using the Workforce Network as the jobs become harder to fill and turn to temporary help agencies as an alternative source of workers.

Job Seeker Perceptions on Jobs They Turned Down

Job seekers were perhaps being overly cautious in their job search activities. A few of them mentioned that they could only turn down so many jobs and then they would lose their unemployment benefits, so they sometimes accepted work they did not really want.. The range of jobs turned down mirrored the jobs they did not want to work, (and might also have been an unspoken reason that they did not want a particular job). In addition, **the reasons for turning the job down also matched with pay being the top response.**

Following pay, the second most frequent response was a lack of hours, or contrarily the job was listed as part-time and they wanted fulltime. Or the job was paying a decent amount, but they were not allowed to work fulltime. The distinction between pay and hours can be a bit murky. The job seekers specifically mentioned a lack of hours at all pay levels was another reason for turning down a job.

A few individuals commented that they turned down jobs due to **lack of transportation.** This was a primary reason given in Silsbee, where the job seekers said that there were no jobs in the area and one had to leave Silsbee to find work.

Another reason given was **childcare.** This had several facets. Some cited lack of childcare resources as their reason, others mentioned that the childcare was not available during second or third shifts.

Job Seeker Perceptions on Employment Barriers

When asked about the obstacles faced in their job search activities, the predominate obstacle cited was a lack of knowledge. **The lack of knowledge was in whom they**

knew not what they knew. The belief is that it is not what you know but whom you know if you want to get a job.

One of the other most cited reasons was lack of transportation. From Silsbee to Orange, this response was given in every group. The job seekers either pointed to a lack of public transit or the inability for them to find reliable transportation to commute to a job.

A close third to transportation was a lack of jobs. The general perception of the job seeker is that the area has no jobs. The jobs that are available are listed with temporary help agencies. It was mentioned that job postings in the Centers tended to either be old postings or they were hard to fill jobs.

During one discussion, it was brought up that the current system penalizes the job seeker - they have to use the system and follow the steps or they lose their eligibility and their benefit checks. Yet, they contend there is **no built in incentive for employers to use the system.** The discussion included giving employers a benefit for posting jobs with the Centers. The thought was that if people had to use the system, then so should employers, this would increase the likelihood of finding work through the Workforce Centers.

The perception (and misconception) is that unemployment insurance is their (the claimants') money because it came out of their wages.

A study release in September 2001 by the Center for Workforce Preparation noted that only five percent of the employers in their survey of 1,836 businesses reported using the Workforce Centers in their local area, and that among those who had used the services, few reported high levels of satisfaction with the services. In the Southeast Texas WDA, the percentages are higher with **approximately 10 percent of the local employers using the Workforce Centers.** The top resource listed was employee referrals. Temporary Help Agencies, those filling job openings for a fee, came in fourth with 20 percent of the employers using this resource for job recruitment.

It appears as if the job seekers' perception about employers not using the system has some merit. The Oregon Labor Trends uses their monthly newsletter as one way to combat this low Workforce Center usage. In their December 2001 issue, they have a special call to action for employers stressing the lower recruitment costs that are associated with using the Workforce Centers' pre-paid job posting services.

The job seekers also commented that childcare and family related issues made the job search difficult. Again, this centered either on a lack of childcare or the cost of childcare. **Working two part time jobs at minimum wage does not allow a job seeker to make enough money to cover the costs of living (housing, utilities, food, etc) and pay for childcare.**

Finally, some of the other obstacles that were mentioned were an age and race bias and competition with an influx of workers that the jobseekers believed were undocumented.

What Job Seekers Want in Their Next Job

The jobseekers were asked about their next job, specifically, what they were seeking. The responses to this question started with again with money being the most critical factor. Numerous individuals stated they would like a higher paying job with benefits. However, unlike earlier questions, **the responses to this one took a decided turn to other job factors, mainly job security and stability.** The job seekers were concerned for the here and now on the monetary side. They also saw that the long-term commitment and security from employment could be an offset to a lower, although not drastically lower, wage.

One of the other areas mentioned was respect. **The job seekers wanted to feel like their employers respected them,** that they were offered a chance to grow both personally and within the company. Several individuals even mentioned having **educational opportunities** so they could sharpen their skills and become a better employee for their employer.

In a study conducted jointly by the Hudson Institute and Walker Information in 2000, 10,000 employees from 32 countries were asked "What makes you loyal to your employer?" The top three responses were **trust, fairness, and an opportunity to grow.** These findings coupled with the job seekers' perception paint a clear picture - money is important, however, it is not the only reason for taking and keeping a job.

A second study in March 2001 by Watson Wyatt reported that employees younger than 30 rated "the opportunity to develop skills" as being more important than money as a primary reason to stay with an employer. Again, data from the job seekers mirrors this trend; **they want an opportunity for job security, job growth, and personal growth, all goals compatible with employers' desires.**

Job Seeker Perceptions of the SETX Workforce Centers

Overall, the Workforce Centers in the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Area were praised. Many of the customers mentioned how friendly the staff was, and how the resources were plentiful. However, some feedback pointed out areas for attention.

Several of the participants their concern about the level of customer service they received. Part of this perception apparently stemmed from the belief that the staff did not know all the resources they had available. In some cases, the job seekers felt some employees did not have an understanding about the local area because they were not from the area.

Other comments showed that the jobseekers did not understand what the Centers offered or what services were available to them. The consensus was that if there were a stronger focus on one-on-one training, the job seekers would be better off. **They also did not understand what a "Level 1," "Level 2," or "Level 3" client was, and the acronym "WIA" was just as confusing.**

A few individuals commented on the perception that the temporary help agencies worked harder to find them jobs since they would receive payment for placing them in a job. The biggest drawback seen to the temporary help agencies was that the job seekers received a reduced check if they worked. The job seekers were aware that employers paid a higher wage to the temporary help agency than the agency paid the workers. Other individuals mentioned the lack of good jobs in the system, a direct spin off from the lack of incentive for employers to use the Centers. Throughout the area, individuals thought that **the job postings were not updated often enough.**

One of the comments that appeared in each office was the **preponderance of paperwork.** Several individuals would like to have the volume of forms cut back and some individual forms done away with (WDB-2776 was specifically cited).

The Beaumont Office received the highest reviews with several individuals commenting on the professionalism of the staff and that they "were willing to go above and beyond the call of duty" and listen to them. The staff was also cited for being friendly. The Port Arthur office also received some positive feedback on the staff's attitude and willingness to help.

One of the suggestions for improving the Centers was **to remove all required Monday meetings at the Centers for the job seekers.** The overwhelming sentiment was that the best job searching day was Monday, and scheduling classes and required meetings on Mondays took away the prime day for job search activities. Perhaps scheduling meetings later in the week would be a viable option.

Another suggestion was for the Centers to **offer computer training at central locations** to alleviate some of the transportation issues. The job seekers knew the Centers offered computer training, but wanted to have the training at other locations like the Parkdale Mall or Central Mall, or some other central location with transit stops. Individuals from both Beaumont and Silsbee commented on the offsite computer training.

A suggestion was made to **help the job seekers understand how they should dress for an interview and explain the interpersonal skills which could help them land a job.** (The Labor Market Information Department has released a new poster "Top Ten Things for an Interview," which covers the basics like dress, appearance, and other intangibles. These posters are available to all Workforce Centers at no cost.)

Some program changes were also suggested. One group thought that training should be offered in learning Spanish because it is a valuable language to know in the local area. They recognize the need some employers have for bilingual workers.

Summary

The Southeast Texas Community Audit was conducted in the three-county area known as the Golden Triangle (Hardin, Jefferson, and, Orange Counties). The study was conducted to analyze the characteristics of the unemployed persons in the region. The study found:

1. What attributes are shared by the unemployed?

Nearly 40 percent of the insured unemployed have been out of work for over 15 weeks. This is slightly higher than the 35 percent of Texas statewide who have been unemployed for over 15 weeks. Most of the individuals, 38 percent, come from the Construction industry, the Services industry was second.

2. What skill sets do the unemployed workers possess?

The majority of the unemployed (39 percent) was from the construction crafts: welders, carpenters, and pipe fitters. Skill sets that are not readily transferable to telemarketing or other services or retail trade occupations. The second highest unemployed occupation was service occupations like waiters and waitresses, security guards, and cosmetologists.

3. What are the historic underpinnings to the area's unemployment?

The area's industrial mix has long been dominated by the Construction and Manufacturing industries. While these industries still play an important role, their dominance has diminished. In fact, of the two, only the Construction industry has continued to grow, with the Manufacturing industry declining by over eight percent in the last ten years. These two industries have also been the hardest hit industries in terms of mass layoffs. The Construction industry has seen 21 layoffs that have impacted 3,130 individuals during the survey period. In addition, the Manufacturing industry experienced nine layoff events with over 2,040 separations. Many people employed in construction jobs find themselves unemployed upon the completion of a contract. In fact, according to data from the Mass Layoff Statistics Program, the number-one cited reason for layoffs was contract completion. The cyclical nature of the construction industry may be one contributing factor to the higher unemployment rate in the region.

4. What is the current industrial mix in the area?

Currently, the Services sector accounts for nearly 25 percent of all jobs in the region. This is followed by the Trade sector with 23 percent, then by Manufacturing with 15 percent of the jobs, Local Government with 12 percent, and rounding out the top five is the Construction industry with 11 percent of the jobs. Both the Construction and Manufacturing industries have higher concentrations in the region that they do statewide. Even with an 11 percent share of employment, the Manufacturing industry

lost over 2,000 jobs between 1990 and 2000. During this same time period, the Construction industry grew by over 5,300 jobs.

5. What are the common perceptions of the unemployed?

Many of the job seekers believe that there are not a lot of good paying jobs located in the Golden Triangle. They also believe that the system is set up to punish job seekers, and that there are no incentives for employers to post jobs with the Workforce Network. There appears to be a mismatch between the skills the job seekers possess and the skills the employers are seeking.

There is a common perception that the wages offered are not commensurate with the required workload. The basic wage requirement of the job seekers is between \$8.00 and \$9.00 per hour, depending on benefits. The job seekers believe that there are no jobs available in the area, except for temporary help jobs.

The job seekers seem to desire the same things in their next job as any reasonable person would. They realize the advantages of tangible and intangible benefits, and generally have realistic wage expectations.

Appendix A: Fastest Growing Occupations in the SETX Area

Ten Year Projected Growth Rate	
Systems Analyst	60.0%
Correctional Officers	44.4%
Teachers Aides, Paraprofessional	39.1%
Chemical Equipment Controllers / Operators	33.3%
Teachers, Special Education	30.0%
Service Supervisors / Managers, Superintendents	27.8%
Adjustment Clerks	27.3%
Police Patrol Officers	27.3%
Telemarketers / Door Sales / Related Workers	27.3%
Cooks, Restaurant	26.3%
Welders and Cutters	25.0%
Waiter and Waitresses	22.9%
Assemblers / Fabricators, Ex. Machine / Electrical	22.7%
Teachers, Secondary Schools	22.4%
Chemical Plant & Systems Operators	21.4%
Cooks, Fast Food	21.4%
Social Workers, Ex Medical / Psychiatric	21.4%
First Line Supervisors : Construction / Extraction	20.0%
Chemical Equipment Tenders	20.0%
Truck Drivers, Light	19.2%
Hand Packers & Packagers	18.8%
Salesperson, Retail	18.5%
Hairdressers / Hairstylists / Cosmetologists	18.5%
Truck Drivers, Heavy	17.9%
Cashiers	17.2%

**Appendix B: Occupations Adding the Most Jobs in the SETX Area,
1998 – 2008**

Jobs Added Between 1998 and 2008	
Salesperson, Retail	1,000
Cashier	750
General Managers & Top Executives	650
Correctional Officers	600
Teachers, Secondary School	550
Waiters and Waitresses	550
Office Clerks, General	450
Food Preparation / Service Workers, Fast Food	450
Teachers Aides, Paraprofessional	450
Registered Nurses	400
Teachers, Elementary Schools	350
Nursing Aides / Orderlies / Attendants	350
Truck Drivers, Heavy	350
Welders and Cutters	350
First Line Supervisors : Construction	300
Chemical Equipment Controllers / Operators	300
Systems Analysts	300
Marketing / Sales Supervisors	250
Office / Administrative Support Supervisor	250
Truck Drivers, Light	250
Assemblers / Fabricators, Ex Machine / Electrical	250
Cooks, Restaurant	250
Service Supervisors / Managers Superintendents	250
Janitors & Cleaners	200
Home Health Aides	200

Appendix C: Targeted Occupations from the Southeast Texas Workforce Development Board

Accountants and Auditors	Bachelor's Degree	\$42,670
Assemblers / Fabricators	Short-Term on-the-job training	\$21,350
Automotive Mechanics / Service Technicians	Post-Secondary Vocational Education	\$26,210
Billing / Cost / Rate Clerks	Short-Term on-the-job training	\$45,240
Bus / Truck / Diesel Engine Mechanics	long-term on-the-job training	\$28,870
Chemical Equipment Controllers / Operators	Moderate-Term on-the-job training	\$45,740
Computer Support Specialists	Bachelor's Degree	\$55,010
Computer Technicians	<i>not listed</i>	
Cooks, Restaurant	long-term on-the-job training	\$15,990
Correctional Officers	long-term on-the-job training	\$26,740
Customer Service Representatives, Utility	Short-Term on-the-job training	\$22,520
Dental Assistants	Moderate-Term on-the-job training	\$27,079
Dental Hygienists	Associate Degree	\$52,051
Drafters	Post-Secondary Vocational Education	\$34,410
Electrical / Electronic Technicians	Associate Degree	\$41,740
Electrical Powerline Installers / Repairers	long-term on-the-job training	\$41,030
Electricians	long-term on-the-job training	\$36,540
Food Service & Lodging Managers	Work Experience	\$29,440
Heat / AC / Refrigeration Mechanics / Installers	long-term on-the-job training	\$31,548
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	long-term on-the-job training	\$48,510
Internet Development Specialists	<i>emerging and developing occupation</i>	
Licensed Practical / Vocational Nurse	Post-Secondary Vocational Education	\$26,420
Machinists	long-term on-the-job training	\$27,770
Millwrights	long-term on-the-job training	\$38,030
Nursing Aides / Orderlies / Attendants	Short-Term on-the-job training	\$14,810
Office Clerks, General	Short-Term on-the-job training	\$19,260
Pharmacy Technicians	Moderate-Term on-the-job training	\$18,710
Physical Therapy Assistants / Aides	Moderate-Term on-the-job training	\$38,190
Plumbers / Pipefitters / Steamfitters	long-term on-the-job training	\$40,320
Reception & Information Clerks	Short-Term on-the-job training	\$16,930
Registered Nurses	Associate Degree	\$40,730
Sales Agents, Advertising	Moderate-Term on-the-job training	\$21,800
Sales Agents, Business Services	Moderate-Term on-the-job training	\$23,260
Salesperson, Retail	Short-Term on-the-job training	\$19,550
Sheet Metal Workers	Moderate-Term on-the-job training	\$31,410

Social / Human Service Assistants	Moderate-Term on-the-job training	\$23,850
Surveying / Mapping Technicians	Post-Secondary Vocational Education	\$46,650
Systems Analysts	Bachelor's Degree	\$55,010
Teachers, Elementary School	Bachelor's Degree	\$35,560
Teachers, Secondary School	Bachelor's Degree	\$37,710
Teachers, Special Education	Bachelor's Degree	\$34,810
Truck Drivers, Heavy	Short-Term on-the-job training	\$26,570
Truck Drivers, Light	Short-Term on-the-job training	\$23,330
Webmasters	<i>emerging and developing occupation</i>	
Welders and Cutters	Post-Secondary Vocational Education	\$30,060

Appendix D: Top 20 Applicant Desired Occupations

Cashier I
Administrative Clerk - General Office Clerk
Laborer, Stores - Warehouse Worker
Construction Worker II
Welder, Combination
Nurse Assistant
Carpenter
Pipe Fitter - Plumber
Cook, Hotel and Restaurant
Accountant
Cleaner, Housekeeping
Welder, Arc
Material Handler - Utility Worker
Truck Driver, Heavy
File Clerk I
Sales Representative, Office Machines
Clerk - Typist
Chemical Operator III
Cleaner, Commercial or Institutional
Electrician
Accounting Clerk
Cook, Fast Food
Salesperson, General Merchandise
Kitchen Helper
Deliverer, Outside - Courier, Messenger

Appendix E: Top 20 Last Held Occupations

Cashier
Laborer
Cook
Welder
Helper
Provider
Operator
Driver
Manager
Sales
Pipe Fitter
Truck Driver
Labor
Carpenter
Waitress
Clerk
Secretary
Receptionist
Supervisor

Appendix F: Top 25 Projected Annual Job Openings

Occupation	Annual Average Job Openings		
	Growth	Replacement	Total
Salespersons, Retail	100	185	285
Cashiers	75	190	265
Food Preparation Workers, Fast Food	45	150	195
Waiters and Waitresses	55	135	190
General Managers & Top Executives	65	85	150
Office Clerks, General	45	100	145
Teachers, Secondary School	55	80	135
Correctional Officers	60	35	95
Teachers, Elementary School	35	55	90
Food Preparation Workers	10	80	90
Registered Nurses	40	45	85
Janitors and Cleaners	20	50	70
First Line Supervisors, Construction	30	40	70
Welders and Cutters	35	35	70
Nursing Aides / Orderlies / Attendants	35	30	65
Truck Drivers, Heavy	35	30	65
Marketing / Sales Supervisors	25	35	60
Office Administrative Support Supervisors	25	35	60
Teachers Aides, Paraprofessional	45	15	60
Cooks, Restaurant	25	25	50
Chemical Equipment Controllers / Operators	30	20	50
Carpenters	10	35	45
Truck Drivers, Light	25	20	45
Assemblers / Fabricators	25	20	45
Service Supervisors / Managers / Superind.	25	20	45

Appendix G: Educational Attainment and Desired Wages

# of people	Education Level	Average Desired Wage
131	00	\$7.89
291	01	\$10.07
29	02	\$9.09
66	03	\$9.51
62	04	\$10.13
41	05	\$10.49
374	06	\$10.41
154	07	\$8.76
464	08	\$7.68
1,205	09	\$7.77
1,947	10	\$7.45
3,087	11	\$7.94
18,582	12	\$9.38
1,769	13	\$9.42
5,797	14	\$11.07
592	15	\$12.55
1,598	16	\$14.98
87	17	\$16.67
206	18	\$18.08
277	19	\$11.43
63	AD	\$12.17
1,205	GED	\$7.07

Appendix H: Desired Wages and Work Schedule

# Individuals	Avg. Wages	1st Shift	2nd Shift	3rd Shift	Rotating Shift	Split Shift
211	\$8.21					
106	\$8.93					1
593	\$9.88				1	
17	\$9.17				1	1
355	\$7.68			1		
4	\$6.81			1		1
14	\$6.73			1	1	
9	\$6.64			1	1	1
949	\$7.17		1			
2	\$6.00		1			1
5	\$5.51		1		1	
168	\$6.81		1	1		
1	\$6.00		1	1		1
9	\$5.72		1	1	1	
22	\$7.55		1	1	1	1
20,042	\$10.20	1				
24	\$9.41	1				1
129	\$10.19	1			1	
4	\$12.08	1			1	1
131	\$8.58	1		1		
3	\$5.77	1		1		1
11	\$8.44	1		1	1	
5	\$9.58	1		1	1	1
1,514	\$7.40	1	1			
12	\$7.07	1	1			1
27	\$7.47	1	1		1	
8	\$8.19	1	1		1	1
517	\$7.77	1	1	1		
8	\$8.25	1	1	1		1
1,111	\$8.82	1	1	1	1	
12,016	\$9.53	1	1	1	1	1

Appendix I: Top 30 Applicant Skills

Applicant Supplied Skill	Number of Applicants
CASHIERING WORK	8,295
GENERAL CLERICAL WORK	5,606
PERSONAL COMPUTING WORK	5,148
CONSTRUCTION LABOR WORK	4,932
MONEY HANDLING	4,678
CUSTOMER CLERICAL WORK	4,590
FILING WORK	3,906
FORKLIFT TRUCKS	3,903
SUPERVISOR	3,779
GENERAL LABOR WORK	3,770
HELPER	3,678
RECEPTION WORK	3,593
LOADING AND UNLOADING	3,199
WORD PROCESSING PC SOFTWARE	3,076
WAREHOUSING	3,037
SECRETARIAL WORK	2,792
TYPING WORK	2,589
FAST FOOD WORK	2,553
STOCK SHELVING	2,512
GROCERY CHECKING	2,296
OFFICE MACHINE OPERATING	2,213
FOOD COOKING	2,143
WELDING WORK	2,066
SHIPPING AND RECEIVING WORK	2,052
SPREADSHEET PC SOFTWARE	2,050
MATERIAL HANDLING	2,040
PIPEFITTING/STEAMFITTING	2,016
HOUSEKEEPING WORK	1,990
CARPENTRY WORK	1,965
COPIERS	1,948

Appendix J: Top 25 Highest Paying Occupations

Occupation	Annual
Total all occupations	\$28,867.00
Optometrists	\$100,974.00
Veterinarians	\$87,181.00
Engineering Managers	\$84,165.00
Lawyers	\$80,487.00
Chief Executives	\$73,650.00
Chemical Engineers	\$69,226.00
Industrial Engineers	\$68,905.00
Natural Sciences Managers	\$68,125.00
Civil Engineers	\$67,911.00
Pharmacists	\$67,609.00
Industrial Production Managers	\$66,787.00
Insurance Sales Agents	\$66,396.00
Engineers, All Other	\$66,157.00
Marketing Managers	\$65,247.00
Computer and Information Systems Managers	\$64,439.00
Industrial Engineering Technicians	\$64,157.00
Financial Managers	\$63,901.00
Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers	\$63,794.00
Computer Software Engineers, Systems Software	\$62,917.00
Electrical Engineers	\$62,815.00
Managers, All Other	\$60,234.00
Sales Managers	\$59,896.00
Management Analysts	\$59,525.00

Appendix K: Bottom 25 Lowest Paying Occupations

Occupation	Annual
Total all occupations	\$28,867.00
Child Care Workers	\$12,430.00
Pressers, Textile, Garment, and Related Materials	\$12,459.00
Amusement and Recreation Attendants	\$12,521.00
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	\$12,913.00
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	\$12,964.00
Taxi Drivers and Chauffeurs	\$13,103.00
Dining Room and Cafeteria Attendants and Bartender Helpers	\$13,185.00
Personal Care and Service Occupations	\$13,341.00
Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	\$13,407.00
Dishwashers	\$13,443.00
Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop	\$13,788.00
Cashiers	\$13,910.00
Waiters and Waitresses	\$13,952.00
Teacher Assistants	\$13,960.00
Food Preparation and Serving-Related Occupations	\$14,028.00
Crossing Guards	\$14,105.00
Crushing, Grinding, and Polishing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	\$14,201.00
Painting, Coating, and Decorating Workers	\$14,251.00
Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	\$14,315.00
Bakers	\$14,551.00
Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks	\$14,565.00
Order Clerks	\$14,687.00
Photographic Processing Machine Operators	\$14,745.00
Bartenders	\$14,773.00