**State forecasts in-demand careers**

**Retail, accounting, health care, education will need workers**

Dec. 27, 2011 Written by **Jodi Schwan**

Rachel Hawthorne, a patient care technician, talks about a patient with Carlotta McKittrick, an LPN, at Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center.

Anyone who can run a cash register, prepare tax forms or troubleshoot a computer likely will be able to find a job in South Dakota during the next several years. Those are some of the occupations predicted to be the most in demand until 2018, according to a report by the state Department of Labor & Regulation.

The report projected that, overall, jobs will grow by 8.8 percent from 2008 to 2018 – the equivalent of 41,365 positions. The occupations predicted to be most in demand represent sectors from retail and health care to education and financial services.

“One of the great things job-seekers tell us over and over about Sioux Falls is the diversity of employment available that continues to grow,” said Greg Johnson, manager of the Labor Department’s office in Sioux Falls.

**Retail leads the way**

Retail accounts for one in four jobs in South Dakota, according to the National Retail Federation.

“A lot of times it gets lost – what retail’s impact is in South Dakota. It’s obviously a very service-sector dominated state,” said Shawn Lyons, executive director of the South Dakota Retailers Association.

It’s also a sector that’s expected to add thousands of jobs. The state projected that between 2008 and 2018 it would need an additional 1,585 retail salespeople, 805 cashiers and 875 waiters and waitresses.

“It’s been a very sustained pattern of growth,” Lyons said. “You can see what’s happened in Sioux Falls, Lincoln County, where you’re seeing new retail establishments opening up.”

When Bohme Boutique opened in The Empire Mall two months ago, the store hired 22 employees and had an enthusiastic response from applicants, said Mary Fisk, assistant manager.

“I feel honored to start at the base of a brand-new company that’s just getting running,” she said. “I’m used to working with large (retail) corporations, and there’s such a personal feeling in this company.”

The boutique didn’t have trouble finding workers, Fisk said. The ability to deliver excellent customer service is what sets employees apart in the retail sector, she said.

But Lyons said some retailers do struggle at times to fill positions.

“One of the things we hear from our members is the need for culinary management, hospitality management and inventory accounting, those type of positions,” he said.

While retail jobs start among the lower-paying occupations, there are opportunities to advance that should be promoted more among potential applicants, Lyons said.

In addition to population growth, a boom in niche retail is creating opportunities at specialty stores.

“All signs point to a great economy in Sioux Falls for retail,” Fisk said. “In my experience in retail, there was a period where it was a little dark for us, but in the last couple years I’ve seen the light coming on, and I’m excited and very optimistic about retail and where it’s going.”

**Spark in financial services**

Increasing regulations and upcoming retirements are creating demand for accountants and auditors, an occupation the state projects will grow by 18 percent, or 755 positions.

“It surprises me that we would be that high, but it’s a good thing,” said Kevin Doyle, the partner-in-charge at Eide Bailly’s Sioux Falls office, which plans to add 10 people. “Things that are compliance-driven are hiring a lot of people,” Doyle said. “Government, banking and health care organizations would be the biggest.”

While firms in larger markets have had trouble filling positions, Doyle said the Sioux Falls office focuses on succession planning to promote from within and has internal programs that emphasize leadership development and community involvement.

“It’s been a big success for us,” Doyle said.

Other jobs in financial services also are opening after several years of declines in the sector. The state had projected a reduction of 1,100 jobs in credit remediation and related activities, but recent announcements might improve the outlook.

“We are seeing a huge resurgence in financial services,” said Mary Medema, workforce development director for the Sioux Falls Development Foundation. “Premier (Bankcard) is hiring again, which is great. Citibank is increasing staff, and then you’ve got Capital One hiring 400 and wanting many of them on board in the first quarter, and I think they’ll make that attractive.”

The Sioux Falls area accounts for 50 percent of the state’s financial services jobs, Medema said, adding that as new employers choose to bring business to the city, it creates a solid cluster of jobs.

“My favorite thing about it happening as a cluster is that it draws people and it gets attention from a much larger area because it’s easier to compete for multiple positions than for one,” she said. “The word reaches further, the potential for someone getting a job.”

**Health care boom continues**

Positions in South Dakota hospitals are expected to increase nearly 14 percent by 2018. That equates to 3,045 additional positions.

“Hospital jobs, in general, are definitely going to be up,” said Bill McLean, senior vice president of human resources at Avera McKennan.

Registered nurses are projected to increase more than 20 percent, or 2,160 positions. Experienced RNs are likely to be most in demand.

“We are able to find enough RNs being produced each year by the colleges in our area. But when we need experienced nurses for certain positions, they’re tougher to find,” McLean said.

Sanford Health is experiencing the same thing, said Lisa White, a health care recruiting specialist.

“A lot of the graduates that we see are family practice-specific, and a lot of the roles we have are more for our specialty clinics,” White said. “So to find someone that has experience in that specialty is definitely a challenge, and we’re exploring how to find individuals to fill those positions.”

Both hospitals also expect to add advanced providers, which includes advanced nurse practitioners and physician assistants.

“They’re just an asset to the clinics,” White said. “They’re able to allow the clinics to see more patients.”

Hospitals are expecting they also will need more radiologic technicians; the state anticipates 135 more positions. Health information technicians also are projected to grow by 14 percent, or 155 positions.

“All of IT is growing faster than anything just because so much of what we’re expected to do in health care is through an electronic medical record,” McLean said.

Both hospitals point to relationships with area schools and internal programs for professional development as ways they meet their staffing needs.

“It’s a constant challenge,” McLean said. “It’s not like people just fall out of the sky and we don’t have to work for finding good people; we do. But we have an excellent employment team that does a great job of finding people with the right fit for our culture, and I’m sure most employers would say the same thing. We work very hard at that.”

**Education offers jobs**

In the next 10 years, 40 percent of the Sioux Falls School District’s staff could choose to retire, said Becky Dorman, human resources supervisor. Demand for teachers statewide is expected to increase 5 percent.

“Our candidate pools are bigger for elementary education, physical education positions and some middle school positions,” Dorman said. “Special education, high-level math and science, world language and specialized teachers, like those that would teach at our Career & Technical Academy, are typically more difficult positions to fill.”

Enrollment has grown by 500 students each of the past couple years, according to Sue Simons, assistant superintendent of human resources and legal services. Population growth in cities near Sioux Falls also is driving the need for more teachers, according to Medema of the development foundation. Harrisburg and Brandon, whose school districts spill into Sioux Falls, are building schools inside the city limits and will be adding jobs, she said.

**Technology drives hiring**

As technology advances and evolves, the need for people who understand it and can help businesses use it likely will increase as well. The state projects a 29 percent increase in software engineers. Network administrators might see a 13 percent increase.

“We know the future lays in technology, and computers are going to grow that technology,” said Johnson of the Labor Department.

State jobs data is meant as a tool for employers, he said.

“We want to be able to relate to employers what we are seeing and how it affects them.” he said. “What’s the demand, how do you grow those people, where do they come from and how do we connect employers with those resources. Some employers are absolutely not surprised at all (by the data). They live this every day.”

<http://siouxfallsbusinessjournal.argusleader.com/article/20111228/BJNEWS/312280037/0/NEWS/State-forecasts-demand-careers?odyssey=mod|lateststories>

1. Which job sectors will see the most growth in South Dakota through 2018?
2. What types of jobs are included in retail?
3. Are retail positions among the highest paid jobs or lowest paid? Why?
4. The Sioux Falls area accounts for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ percent of the state’s financial service jobs.
5. Which career in the health services’ industry will account for most of the job growth in that field in South Dakota?
6. Which types of teachers will be in the highest demand in the near future in South Dakota?
7. What 2 factors are driving the need for more teachers in the Sioux Falls area?
8. What are the 2 technology careers mentioned that will experience significant growth in South Dakota in the near future?
9. Do any of the careers mentioned in this article interest you? If no, why not? If yes, which ones?
10. In your adult life, would you like to live in South Dakota? Why or why not?