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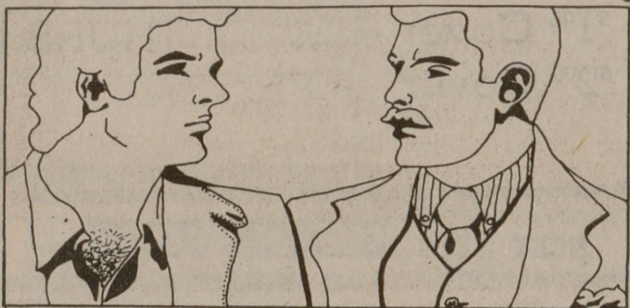
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Disadvantaged find jobs through CETA

By CAROL THOMAS
Battalion Reporter

Unemployment for the Bryan-College Station area is characteristically low. For January 1981, the unemployment rate was 3.6 percent, the third lowest in the state. This is .1 percent lower than January 1980. And labor market analyst Hamp Patterson of the Texas Employment Commission said this low unemployment rate is maintained throughout the year.

Patterson attributes low unemployment to an abundance of government jobs. This includes jobs at Texas A&M University. "Forty-four out of every 100 workers in this county are working for the government," Patterson said.

Although the unemployment rate given by TEC only takes into account people who have registered for employment with TEC. An unemployed person who has not registered for work at TEC is not included in this statistic.

Comprehensive Employment Training Act planner Bill Stanley tends to agree that unemployment is not always reported to TEC.

"There are a lot of people who don't use TEC as a source," Stanley said. "Most jobs are found through friends and relatives, and many employers ask employees."

Thus, while the unemployment rate given by TEC is low, this does not erase the fact that there are unskilled, economically disadvantaged or insecure people in this area who need jobs but do not know how to go about finding them.

For many of these people, the CETA program could be the answer.

The purpose of CETA, which is funded jointly by the Department of Labor and the Texas Department of Community Affairs, is to provide the economically disadvantaged, unemployed and underemployed with job training and employment opportunities.

Stanley said CETA aims its program at recipients of government aid, blacks, homemakers, the economically disadvantaged, ex-offenders, females, the handicapped, Mexican-Americans, senior citizens, veterans and youth.

In order to become involved in the CETA program, the potential participant applies at the Occupational Exploration Center in Bryan. Eligibility is determined by the income level.

Stanley said CETA deals with people who want to pursue a particular career as well as those who have no idea of what they want to do.

To determine which program is best for the CETA participant, the OEC has what they call job clusters.

"Forty-four out of every 100 workers in this county are working for the government," — Hamp Patterson, Texas Employment Commission labor market analyst.

Orientation and assessment specialist Diane Logan said they try to determine through job clusters what skills the person has and what skills she needs. If a person is highly unskilled, they try to put her into a classroom training program.

During classroom training, CETA pays the student minimum wage as well as paying for the cost of schooling and supplies. Several classroom training

opportunities are offered. For example, a potential secretary needs to develop her skills train at McKenzie-Baldwin Business College. Also, a person wants to become a cook can the 12-week food service program. And heavy equipment operators can take an eight-week training school at Texas A&M Agricultural Extension Service.

Another program provided by CETA is on-the-job training. This program the participant receives real job and is trained by the supervisor of the work site. They are split between the employer and CETA.

"This gives a person the opportunity to be exposed to a working atmosphere," Stanley said. Also, after training, the participant will have hopefully gained enough experience to get a job subsidized by the government.

"And, if after the training period, the employer is satisfied that's a plus," Stanley said.

For the fiscal year of 1981, CETA served 940 people, from Brazos and Robertson counties. Out of the 940 listed, found, non-subsidized employment. Also included in the were high school students who not want permanent employment at the time, Stanley said.

Of all the people who participate in the CETA program, Stanley said, black women are most numerous.

One former CETA participant, Sandra Perez, who works for

"It helped me in every way I could think of," said Sandra Perez, who has been in the CETA program.

OEC, said she has benefited greatly from the program. "I was interested in getting clerical training and I didn't have enough money," Perez said. Through CETA, Perez attended McKenzie-Baldwin College and worked part time at OEC for months.

"It helped me in every way I could think of," she said. "I got CETA I would probably be working at Dairy Queen or some place like that."

The future for CETA is bleak, if any future exists at all. CETA is among the many programs which President Reagan hopes to abolish. Reagan has also placed a hiring freeze on government employees.

"This means we can no longer enroll participants in CETA activities," Stanley said. "There is a possibility we may have to cut back staff."

"I think he (Reagan) ought to sit down and think about the people CETA is helping, like me," Perez said. "I've seen a lot of them out here with goals like mine and just hope they get a chance to reach them."

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