

# Help wanted

Lack of full-time jobs shows companies doing more with less

By Adam Geller  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LIBERTYVILLE, Ill. — Shouting over the whine of pneumatic screwdrivers, Phyllis Patrick points to changes in the assembly line that twists around her, evidence of a labor market starting to thaw.

In a plant where workers were asked last year to take time off without pay, managers have posted eight hours overtime on the scheduling board for the coming Saturday. At stations alongside Patrick, a handful of temporary workers have been added as orders for the plant's cordless nail-guns climbed. And now word is spreading down the line that ITW Paslode is set to hire 14 new full-timers.

"We could always use a few more," the safety-goggle-clad Patrick says, turning back to a workbench where she's testing motors in the partially assembled nail guns.

The pickup at Paslode's plant, 45 minutes north of Chicago, is good news in an economy that has been very slow to generate new jobs. It comes with a big asterisk: Those are about the only new jobs that Paslode's parent, a \$10 billion manufacturing conglomerate that prides itself on running lean, sees adding anytime soon.

"Why would you be hiring people right now?" says John Brooklier, vice president of investor relations for the parent company, Illinois Tool Works Inc., which has shrunk its U.S. payroll from about 36,000 to 28,000 in the past three years. "If you still have a ways to go before (manufacturing) capacity is filled, where are the jobs going to come from?"

Variations of that question loom over an economy that is down about 2 million jobs since early 2001. Despite a government report showing the United States added 308,000 jobs in March, many analysts continue to puzzle over the logic of employers' hiring decisions in an economy that by most measures is in high gear.

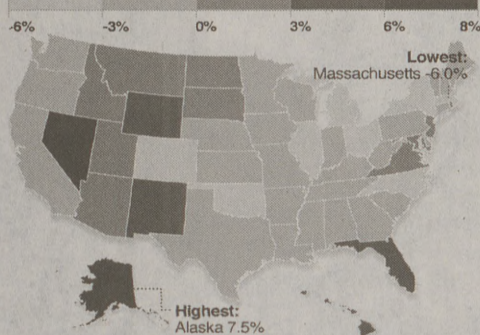
As election-year politics heat up, much of the public's attention has focused on "offshoring" as the culprit in the lack of new employment.

The truth behind the short supply of new jobs,

## Head West for golden opportunities

In the past three years, Western states had a job loss of 0.6 percent, less than half the national rate of 1.5 percent.

Percent change in job growth, Jan. 2001-Jan. 2004



SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics  
Kathryn Tam • AP  
hinted at by changes at companies such as ITW, is more complicated.

In a nutshell, businesses have figured out how to do more with fewer full-time workers. Even as the economy grows, many companies are reaping the benefits in part by rethinking the way they utilize people.

Part of that is outsourcing, sending some of the work they do to firms and workers who will do it cheaper, both inside and out of the country. Some economists estimate outsourcing overseas accounts for perhaps 10 percent of the jobs lost.

Businesses also are responding to increasing demand by relying more on temporary workers, freelancers and contract workers. Many work off payroll and without benefits.

Employers also are harnessing technology, streamlining and automating operations to reduce the need for labor, and some are pushing remaining workers to do more. Those changes mean they often can respond to increased demand without hiring.

"What employers have really discovered is ... you can have just-in-time employment," says David Wyss, chief economist at Standard & Poors in New York. "That's what this really is — I use the workers when I need them. I don't use the workers when I don't need them."

# DA charges student with faking abduction

By Jenny Price  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MADISON, Wis. — A college student accused of faking her own kidnapping last month was charged Wednesday with lying to police in what they suggested was a desperate attempt to get her boyfriend's attention.

Audrey Seiler, a 20-year-old sophomore at the University of Wisconsin, was charged with two misdemeanor counts of obstructing officers. Each charge carries up to nine months in jail and a \$10,000 fine.

Seiler disappeared from her off-campus apartment March 27 without her coat or purse. She was discovered curled in a fetal position in a marsh four days later, and told police that a man had abducted her at knifepoint.

But police concluded Seiler made up the story after obtaining a store videotape that showed her buying the knife, duct tape, rope and cold medicine she claimed her abductor used to restrain her. Seiler confessed after she was confronted with the tape, according to authorities.

"I set up everything. I'm just so messed up. I'm sorry," they quoted her as saying. But she later recanted the statement, insisting she had been abducted.

Hundreds of people from Madison and Seiler's hometown searched for her after she disappeared, and her claim about an armed man touched off a major manhunt that authorities said cost the police about \$96,000.

Her first court appearance was scheduled for Thursday, but her attorney was expected to

appear in her place.

Lawyer Randy Hopper would not say Wednesday whether she would contest the charges. He called Seiler a "model student, a model citizen."

The criminal complaint depicts Seiler as a young woman upset by a fading relationship with her boyfriend, Ryan Fisher.

Friends said the two had been fighting, and Seiler's roommate, Heather Thue, told officers that Fisher did not pay as much attention to Seiler as she wanted. Seiler's mother told police her daughter had not been herself lately and was "extremely needy" of Fisher.

Three days before she disappeared, her laptop was used to log onto Fisher's e-mail account and read exchanges "with romantic overtones" between him and another woman, according to the complaint.

Hopper said Seiler was home with her parents and receiving "medical care and the care and support that she needs from her family."

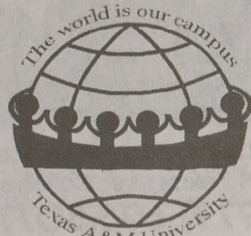
Seiler had also reported an unexplained attack in February, saying she was struck from behind and left unconscious. But the complaint does not say whether police believe that attack was also fabricated.

According to police, one woman spotted Seiler on a bike path near the marsh on March 29, 30 and 31. On March 31, the woman said, she saw Seiler lying in the fetal position. When she asked how Seiler was, Seiler sat up and said she was OK and liked to come to the marsh after class to relax.

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