

Sunday, May 25, 2008 — D-1

Develop a search plan

"Are we ready yet? Haven't I learned enough to do whatever it is job seekers do?" asked Victor.

"Not quite yet, Victor," said Mr. L., teacher of the 21st Century Job Club.

"Before people go out into the job market, they need to develop a career focus and then analyze their employment opportunities.

We're following a step-by-

BOB LANKARD



Bob Lankard's column on job issues appears every other Sunday. He is a retired manager of the employment security program at the state Job Center in Indiana.

who worked 15 years with one company. Then they folded and he was out of a job," Mr. L. said.

His story: "After I was laid off, I took several weeks off. A 'vacation' I called it. I earned it, I told myself. I put in an application here and an application there. Then the money ran out. At the same time, I got a letter from the unemployment section telling me, by my profile, I should go to this workshop at the Job Center," Leighton said.

"Mr. L. had me do all the exercises you are doing, but then he told me to develop a strategy. I called it a plan of attack.

"I first developed two versions of my résumé and had people in my field plus Mr. L. look it over and they gave me input.

"I had to make a list of everyone I know..."

Leighton said. "Wow, you had to make up that same networking list," interrupted Susie.

"I first contacted people in my field for an informational interview," Leighton said.

"My goal for these interviews was to find out what was happening in my field since I had been out of work.

"I learned where some of my colleagues had found jobs or where they had applied.

"Fred, one of my former co-workers, was in my class. Since he decided to change fields, his informational interviews were to talk to some over-the-road truck drivers.

"Newspapers were a big part of my job search. I already subscribed to a local paper, so I kept a file of help wanted ads.

"Then I looked at the ads in several other local papers in the library.

"I also made a point of buying The New York Times on Sunday.

"I dug out my Rolodex from work. It added all my business contacts to my networking list.

"I wanted to use as many methods as possible, so I also enlisted the services of a private employment agency," said Leighton.

"Don't those things cost money?" asked Arnie.

"There are all sorts of private agencies. Some involve a fee for the job seeker. With other agencies, the hiring employer pays the fee. Your job is to learn the arrangements with each agency," said Mr. L.

Leighton went on telling how he identified a small group of target employers and learned as much as he could about each one.

Eventually Leighton had three job offers to consider.

He has been working with his new company for five years.

ON THE JOB



JAMIE EMPFIELD/Gazette

SUZANNE COCCAGNA, an Aflac Insurance representative, discussed options with Daniella Salazar, of Indiana, at Job Fair 2008 on Thursday at the S&T Bank Arena while Salazar's daughter, Cadence, 2, met with the company's mascot.

How some stations set the price of gas

By **JOHN WILEN**
AP Business Writer

HAVERTOWN — Steve Kehler spends most of his time working on cars and managing paperwork at the auto repair shop and gas station he runs in this Philadelphia suburb.

Unless an overnight gas shipment forces him to play another round of pricing roulette: Should he raise prices to keep up with pressure from his wholesaler? Or will that kill sales?

"It's not an exact science," he said.

Earlier this week, Kehler's wholesale price jumped by 4 cents a gallon. The price is set by Sunoco Inc., from whom he leases his gas station and is contractually obligated to buy.

Shipments arrive overnight, whenever a remote sensor tells Sunoco that Kehler's tanks are low. The wholesale increase means Kehler will have to raise his pump prices soon — if he wants a shot at breaking even on gas sales.

That decision — the type of pricing dilemma gas station managers face daily — is not as much of a no-brainer as you might think. If a station raises its prices before its competitors, it may lose gasoline sales. But the longer station managers wait — with wholesale prices rising — the more money they lose.

And sometimes they have no choice but to cut prices to keep cash flowing in.

In the end, Kehler decides to wait a full 24 hours before raising his prices by the 4 cents a gallon his own wholesale prices have already risen.

Eighty-eight miles west, in the quaint south-central Pennsylvania river town of Marietta, Kelly Bosley spends more time worrying about the coffee bar and sandwich counter than gasoline sales at the Rutter's Farm Store she manages.

Unless the Sheetz gas station across the street changes its prices. When Sheetz raises its prices above Rutter's, Bosley's pumps are often suddenly swamped. When Sheetz drops its prices, Bosley's pumps empty just as abruptly.

A change in Sheetz's prices typically triggers a call to headquarters. As a company-employed manager, Bosley has to wait for a go-ahead from headquarters to raise prices.

She takes a drive every morning to assess prices at two other area stations, which she calls in to Rutter's main office.

"They call me and tell me when to change it,"

Bosley said. "Sometimes they do, sometimes they don't. Like, last night they called at 10 o'clock and lowered me. I never know."

Bosley says she has been asked to change prices as much as twice a day, but lately only gets a price-change call three times a week. Kehler changes prices with each new load of gasoline — about every three to five days.

Like many gas retailers, Kehler has accepted the fact that he's not going to make money selling gasoline. He hopes the pumps will drive business to the moneymaking side of his business — auto repair.

At many other stations, it's the convenience store that rules the roost. Gas is seen as a loss leader, something a station sells to attract the people who will then be tempted to buy much higher-profit-margin items like coffee and sandwiches.

To keep the customers coming, Bosley's Rutter's is adding a smoothie and milkshake machine, and already offers coffee and cappuccino drinks as well as made-to-order sandwiches.

Bosley posts large ads at the pumps and positions a plethora of goodies, from sandwiches to key chains, between the door and cash registers to generate impulse sales.

"That's why my deli case is here," Bosley said. Kehler has made an even more dramatic decision: He's agreed to move his auto repair shop elsewhere so that Sunoco can turn his existing shop into a convenience store.

Neither Kehler nor Bosley like high prices, which hurt sales and anger customers.

"We're all reluctant to hit that \$4 mark," said Kehler, who said raising prices from \$3.99 to \$4 will have more of an impact on sales to the driving public than a typical one-cent hike.

"It's a psychological thing," Kehler said. "It means a dime in their eyes."

Already this year, Kehler says high prices have cut demand for his gasoline by about 27,000 gallons a month.

He's not eager to see prices pass the \$4 barrier, cutting demand further.

When the time comes, Kehler says he may hold prices steady at \$3.999 a gallon for days and accept a steadily shrinking profit margin rather than be the first station in the area to post \$4 a gallon for regular gas.

"You don't want to price yourself out of the market," he said.



CAROLYN KASTER/Associated Press

A SINGLE CAR fueled up Wednesday at Rutter's gas station in Marietta.

Local optometrist earns state award

By **MARGARET HARPER**
Gazette Staff Writer

Rebecca Wincek Bateson really enjoys her career as an optometrist, especially when working with children.

And it shows. She participates locally in an initiative called "InfantSEE," part of a national public health program that provides free eye examinations for children younger than a year old to ensure healthy vision development.

Last year, parents of every child born at Indiana Regional Medical Center were provided information on the program and vision development due to Wincek Bateson's promotion of the program.

"The sooner vision problems are detected, the sooner we can get them fixed for the kids," she said.

For that work and much more relating to optometry, Wincek Bateson won the Pennsylvania Optometric Association's "Young Optometrist of the Year" award for not only Pennsylvania's southwest region, but for the entire state.

The award "recognizes an optometrist in practice less than 10 years who demonstrates outstanding leadership skills when serving their profession, patients and community," according to the organization.

"It's a huge honor," she said.

Wincek Bateson will receive her award June 6 in Pittsburgh and will compete for the national award with winners from other states.

For the state award, she beat out three other optometrists from other regions.

Because different states submit nominations at various times,

she won't know about the national award until 2009.

Ryan Imler, president of the Southwestern Optometric Society, nominated her for the award.

Wincek Bateson is the secretary of the organization and is a member of the Pennsylvania Optometric Association and American Optometric Association.

Owner of Indiana Eye Care on Philadelphia Street in Indiana, she studied optometry at the Pennsylvania College of Optometry and graduated in 2003.

She bought the Indiana practice in 2004 and is a partner in a Monroe office.

She specializes in contact lenses and corneas, and is going to work on specialization in pediatrics, as she said there are no local offices that specialize in that area.

"I love children," she said.

Wincek Bateson also attempts to educate and advocate for good eye health for those with diabetes, the leading cause of blindness in the U.S.

She is a board member for the Center for Diabetes Care and IRMC, where she helps other members develop programs to benefit the community.

In addition, she offers internships for those studying optometry, works with the Blind Association of Indiana County and is a member of Downtown Indiana, the Indiana and Monroeville chambers of commerce and the Better Business Group of Monroeville.

She said her favorite part of the job is getting to know so many of her patients, and she often sees entire families.

"I learn a lot from them," she said.



TOM PEEL/Gazette

REBECCA WINCEK BATESON has been named "Young Optometrist of the Year" by the Pennsylvania Optometric Association.

BRIEFS

S&T, IBT work out details of merger

S&T Bancorp Inc. has announced the approximate results of the elections made by the shareholders of IBT Bancorp Inc. regarding their preferences as to the form of merger consideration they will receive in connection with the companies' merger.

Of the 5,380,150 shares of IBT common stock subject to the election process, elections were made to exchange 3,162,194 shares, or 59 percent, for S&T common stock and 1,416,217 shares, or 26 percent, for cash. No elections were made with respect to the remaining 801,739 shares.

As provided in the merger agreement, there also were no elections made with respect to the 472,774 shares held by S&T and 112,195 shares held in treasury.

As a result of the elections, IBT shareholders made valid elections to receive more shares of S&T common stock than are available pursuant to the merger agreement.

Therefore, those IBT shareholders who elected to receive S&T common stock will have the amount of shares elected reduced by approximately 6 percent and receive an equivalent payment in cash.

The shares for which no elections were made will be converted into cash consideration at \$31 per share. S&T anticipates that the payment of merger consideration will start within a week of merger consummation in early June.

S&T names three to board of directors

S&T Bancorp Inc. has announced the appointment of the newest members of the S&T board of directors. The latest appointees are former members of the IBT Bancorp Inc. board of directors.

■ Charles G. Urtin has been appointed vice chairman of the S&T board.

Urtin, former chief executive officer and president of Irwin Bank and IBT Bancorp, spent 24 years at Irwin Bank serving as the operations officer and the chief financial officer before being appointed chief executive officer in 1999.

■ Robert Rebich joins the S&T board after serving as chairman of the IBT board, which he joined in 1991 and for which he was appointed chairman in 2004. Rebich founded Daedal Inc. in Irwin in 1969, which was acquired by Parker Hannifin Corp. in 1990.

■ John N. Brenzia, vice president and chief financial officer of Irwin Car and Equipment, has been appointed to the S&T board after serving with the IBT board. He is chairman of the board for Redstone Presbyterian Senior Care in Greensburg.

He is also the former vice president and treasurer of Elliott Ebara Turbomachinery Co. in Jeannette.

On May 13, S&T announced that the shareholders of IBT had approved the previously announced merger in which IBT Bancorp will merge with and into S&T Bancorp.