

Chino Hills Champion

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Job-seekers flood Shoppes fair

By Bruce Wood

Thousands of job seekers descended upon the McCoy Equestrian Center last Saturday for the Chino Hills Job Fair held to fill some of the 2,000 available positions at The Shoppes at Chino Hills, which is scheduled to open May 23.

The attendance was so large that many prospective job seekers were turned away before they reached McCoy Equestrian Center. The southbound lanes of Peyton Drive were closed and approximately 1,000 to 1,200 vehicles were forced to make a U-turn back to Grand Avenue. Nearby parking lots at Ayala High, Community Park and Albertson's Market were filled with cars belonging to job fair attendees.

One of the event organizers, Curtis Compton, business resource specialist from the county's Department of Economic Development, called the turnout "awesome" and estimated that between 3,000 and 5,000 people were at the job fair. He said he hadn't seen a turnout as large since the job fair held for the then-new Victoria Gardens in Rancho Cucamonga.

City of Chino Hills spokeswoman Valerie McClung estimated attendance at more than 2,000. She and Mr. Compton conceded it was difficult to get

an accurate count.

Thirty of the sixty-five announced new tenants for The Shoppes at Chino Hills set up hiring tables where they distributed information about their companies, accepted resumes, gave out job applications and talked to prospective employees.

Job hopefuls Jessica Gonzales and Vanessa Alarzon, both of Chino, arrived an hour before the 9:30 a.m. start of the job fair and were finally admitted into the McCoy Center to meet with prospective employers after waiting in line for more than two hours.

Fuzziwigs Candy Factory store owner Rebecca Huereque said the turnout for the job fair was "overwhelming."

"We brought 1,000 applications and we gave them all out the first hour," she said.

Chaffey College student and Chino resident Melody Barthe

waited in line for two hours to get the chance to talk to Ms. Huereque and other prospective employers.

"The schools did a really great job preparing the students and their resumes," said manager Eric Pierce of Barnes and Noble. "The students' resumes are quite professional and we're getting good quality people," he added.

While most the attendees appeared to be high school students, college students and adults were also present.

Sandra Trujillo of Chino finally made it inside to speak with Paul Atkins, assistant manager of Jared - The Galleria of Jewelry, after waiting in the hot sun for three hours. Mr. Atkins said he arrived at 8:30 a.m. to set up and a "huge crowd" was already in line. "The turnout has been amazing," he said.

Mrs. Trujillo added, "They

need more water out there and to stop the kids from cutting in line."

At the head of the line was Henry Anchondo, business resource specialist from the Department of Economic Development. Mr. Anchondo was admitting 10 to 12 job applicants every few minutes to control the number of people inside at any one time.

The Chino Hills Job Fair was developed as a partnership between the City of Chino Hills, County of San Bernardino, Chaffey College and The Shoppes developer, Opus West. After school programs teaching customer service and resume writing were held for 500 students at Chino Hills and Ayala high schools before the job fair.

"There are no plans, at this time, to hold another job fair for The Shoppes," Mrs. McClung said.



ABOVE: Chaffey College student Melody Barthe of Chino (left) talks with Fuzziwigs Candy Factory store owner Rebecca Huereque at Saturday's job fair.



LEFT: Chino Hills Sheriff's Deputy Raymond Perez diverts traffic from McCoy Equestrian Center.

Champion photos by Bruce Wood