

## They're on the job hunt at spring fair

By Kirk Barron/ kbarron@appealdemocrat.com | Posted: Thursday, April 14, 2016 7:05 pm

Alejandro Castillo came to the annual Spring Job Fair sharply dressed and in search of an information technology job.

He was one of an estimated 400 job seekers who streamed through the fair and met face-to-face with 43 potential employers.

Recruiters sought candidates to fill positions across a spectrum of fields, educational backgrounds and pay grades at the event, which was organized by local workforce agencies, including North Central Counties Consortium and America's Job Center.

Castillo, 31, had worked on his resume with Sutter County One Stop. He recently moved to the United States from Nicaragua with his wife, a Yuba City native he met while she was doing volunteer work in his home country. It took him a few months to get all of the proper paperwork, but now he has everything he needs to search for work.

With nine years experience in IT, including five years at the Nicaragua Office of Education, Castillo is adjusting to finding work in an unfamiliar place.

"I speak Spanish and I need to improve my English, that's the first challenge," said Castillo, who has an accent but communicates clearly. "And the steps for jobs are different in Nicaragua, that's why I went to One Stop."

Those seeking jobs came from all backgrounds, including people whose employers closed, students and some homeless, said Tamara Russ a business workforce specialist at Sutter County One Stop.

A trend this year was putting names to faces, Russ said.

"People are networking again. Employers want to see perseverance, those who are following through," Russ said.

The popularity of online applications may be waning because employers want to be able to get a better read on the applicant's commitment, Russ said.

Ampla Health corporate recruiter Teresa Thornton said she doesn't think there's anything that can replace the in-person interview, though she doesn't have a problem with online applications to start the process.



### Spring Job Fair

Mike Goodwin, 34, of Live Oak, listens to Kyle Reece of the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local Union 228 at the annual Spring Job Fair, Thursday, April 14, 2016, at Veterans Memorial Circle in Yuba City. Goodwin was a pipefitter in the natural gas industry before jobs dried up when gas prices plummeted.

"I find it's best to talk to the applicant to not only match the person to the job but the job to the person," Thornton said.

As Colusa Regional Medical Center nears its last day in operation, some of its employees came to the job fair. Eight medical companies had booths at the event and the competition for mid-level medical candidates is high, Thornton said.

Another trend at the job fair was apprenticeship programs.

The Plumbers and Pipefitters Local Union 228 shared information about its five-year apprenticeship program, which is holding testing in June for the start of the next school year in September, training coordinator Beth Hammes said.

The Local 228's training facility in Yuba City is the only one of its kind north of Sacramento, Hammes said.

"You get paid to work during the day and go to school at night," Hammes said. "It's a great opportunity to earn a good living with great benefits."