Lewiston-Auburn's Weekly Newspaper
TWIN CITY TIMES

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Enough is Enough: Jobs: Those who don't want them and those who are not allowed

August 22, 2013 | Author TCT Staff

By Robert E. Macdonald
Mayor of Lewiston

They are not our brightest. We're in big trouble if they are regarded as our best. They invade Lewiston like a pestilence, infecting a few of our neighborhoods. The majority can barely read or write even though they have lived in this country all their lives. Collectively they appear as a breathing and walking illustration of the Maine State Disability Rating Manual.

Work skills? Please! But worse, they are fawned on by politicians who engage in Herculean efforts to make their idleness more comfortable. This sympathetic policy will soon lead to a new underclass battle cry—Representation without Taxation.

Lewiston is a city on the move. Businesses are setting up shop and need employees. But we have a shortage of young professionals with the academic skills needed to fill these positions. This is why we are in the midst of making our city more livable, hoping to attract new creative young blood to our area.

We further have shortage of skilled technical trade workers. These tradesmen are needed if our local businesses want to grow and expand. Like the young professionals, these jobs will bring growth to our area.

I have made you aware of the shortage of people needed to fill professional and technical jobs. Next are the many jobs that go unfilled because they don't quite rise to the compensation standards of those currently out of work. Many have benefits and offer wages well above the minimum wage, but are not quite attractive enough for a prospective candidate to give up an unemployment check. Many in this category have worked hard all their lives, paid taxes and looked upon unemployment benefits as being earned. They have paid into the system that has supported others and now it is their turn.

If you use unemployment benefits to bridge the gap between layoff to quick future reemployment, you understand the system. If you start off using it to bridge the gap, but then as time goes on, look at it as a vacation, you are hurting yourself in the current job market. The longer you're unemployed your chances for decent employment dissipate. Your resume will be interpreted by prospective employers as someone that is either lazy or that no one wants. The community as a whole then suffers as local companies cannot grow due to a lack of entry level employees.

If your current situation is due to self-pity, drop by the Mayor's Office. I am willing to give you a well-placed kick to start you in the direction towards a successful future.

Next up are my favorites, the barely employable (not to be confused with the working poor). They cannot read, write or add. Their twelve years of learning were spent disrupting the classroom. Dressing for a job interview consists of a tee shirt, jeans and sneakers. Hygiene? Use your imagination. Then there are the body piercings and strategically placed tattoos.

Added to the above are the catastrophic lifestyle changes. Getting up and arriving to work on time. Actual work replacing the playing of video games, TV and hanging with your friends. Sleep replacing overnight drinking. Overnight snoring replacing disorderly behavior. No more trips to City Hall to collect benefits. But, believe it or not, there are actually jobs they can fill.

Lastly, we have two groups that want to work but because of the Federal Government forsaking one group and failing to enforce the law dealing with the other, the people of Lewiston and our sister city Auburn, are suffering financial hardship.

First, the Government has resettled refugees in the area, walking away from them without funding the teaching of a skill needed for employment – English. Many of our refugees are employed but many who want to work find their lack of English a barrier in gaining employment.

Then we have the asylum seekers. At present we have several families possessing skills needed by a local business. However, because of their status, they are not allowed to work until they obtain a work permit. This is made difficult because of their asylum status – it can take from six months to two years to get them a permit. Meanwhile, local citizens are picking up the tab for their living and health expenses while good jobs go unfilled.

To sum this up, our State and Federal Governments will provide unlimited resources to the layabouts and the idle to carry on the lifestyle they've become accustomed to while denying funding and putting up barriers to those who want to work.

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One Response to "Enough is Enough: Jobs: Those who don't want them and those who are not allowed"

- *Jeannine Simmons:*
  August 27, 2013 at 12:56 pm

  First, Mayor Macdonald, you could use some remedial English yourself. The words "state," "federal," and "government" should not be capitalized. Were you paying attention in English class?

  Second, who exactly are you talking about? You've been whining for 20 years about phantom "layabouts" allegedly sucking the system dry. Back in the 1990s, as a mediocre detective, you were griping to the Sun Journal about those lazy folks on disability. Now you're a less-than-mediocre mayor who hasn't come up with a single idea or creative solutions to change what you don't like.

Soon the voters will send you back to Tim Horton's to do your whining. You're right. Enough is enough.

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