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Job opportunities now available for senior citizens

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MILLERSBURG -- Individuals 55 and older who are unemployed but seeking work can learn how they can pick up some part-time hours through opportunities with the Senior Employment Center.

Through a partnership with the Holmes County Senior Center, the SEC is reaching out to Holmes County residents age 55 and up to offer part-time employment and job skills training. A federally funded entity with the Ohio Department of Aging, the SEC can offer employment opportunities for 20 hours a week at local nonprofits and public facilities.

Margaret McCarty, SEC assistant program director, said the employment center offers a chance to earn extra money for seniors who are unemployed but actively seeking work. The part-time jobs are intended as a bridge to full-time work or other employment.

"It helps them financially while they are training," McCarty said. "Having work is a lot more important than people think when you don't have money coming in. For a lot of the people in the program, it means paying for medicine or groceries."

The SEC coordinates seniors and their skills with available job positions. Participants are paid the prevailing minimum wage by the SEC, which is subsidized by state and federal dollars.

Once on the job, McCarty said, the seniors have the opportunity to fine tune existing skills while learning new skills. Further job training can be coordinated through the SEC and local agencies, such as job and family services.

The employment opportunities are available for up to 27 months and participants in the program must meet income guidelines.

Millersburg resident Chick Chanay has been employed with Kno-Ho-Co Head Start through the SEC for 11 months. His wife is retired and Chanay's income from custodial work has helped meet household

expenses.

"It helps keep you involved, keeps you working so you don't get as complacent as you might," Chanay, who is 58, said. "I'm still looking, actively seeking a job. I'd like to get something full time."

McCarty said the SEC has teamed up with several local agencies. In fact, the senior center, which is holding a meeting Tuesday, is looking to fill three part-time positions through the SEC, interim Director Georgie Cool said.

"We need a receptionist and kitchen help," Cool said. "The kitchen help will work with a new flash freezer that helps us prepare weekend meals for our Meals on Wheels program."

The meeting will be held from 10-11 a.m. at West Fork Community and Senior Center. For more information, contact the SEC at 330-264-6630 or the Senior Center at 330-674-0580.