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EMPLOYMENT »

Company calling for 350 new workers

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News-Leader

Only a month after Bell Industries laid off 246 workers, word came that its facility on East Primrose Street will be buzzing with workers once again.

An Englewood, Colo.-based company on Monday confirmed plans to hire 350 skilled technical support workers for its newest service center in Springfield.

An official launch for the newest location of TeleTech Holdings Inc. is scheduled for Aug. 28.

"We heard that facility was available," KC Higgins, a corporate spokeswoman, said of the former MCI call center. "We investigated the demographics and the workforce pool (in Springfield), and we found a match."

TeleTech's latest facility is in Amherst, Ohio. It serves a Fortune 500 healthcare provider.

Workers there are expected to help patients and providers regarding Medicare coverage, such as eligibility, program details, prescription coverage and enrollment.

In Springfield, the center — which will become TeleTech's 89th location — is recruiting skilled technical support staff for one TeleTech client. However, confidentiality agreements forbid Higgins from disclosing the client.

Higgins said TeleTech is committed to the communities where it operates.

"We do our best to hire and retain our employees for the client," she said. "To that extent, we are making that commitment to that community."

Bell Industries, which hired workers exclusively for SunRocket Inc. at the Springfield facility, laid off all local employees when SunRocket went out of business in July. SunRocket was a start-up company that offered Internet-based phone services.

In July 2006, SunRocket and Bell announced their plans to come to Springfield, two months after MCI decided to close the call center on Primrose Street and terminate 400 workers.

Higgins said it's in the best interest of the client-driven company to keep its clients and recruit more.

She added that TeleTech may hire more workers in the Springfield if the company has other clients who can use the local workforce.

An employment ad for technical support representatives at TeleTech, which is posted on www.News-Leader.com, says candidates are expected to provide technical support assistance on phone calls to client product customers, client authorized resellers and client sales representatives.

Higgins said the Springfield facility's employees will primarily take inbound calls but may call out as they return calls or make courtesy calls.

"We're not a telemarketing company," Higgins said.

Job ads for both technical support representatives and senior technical support representatives also say TeleTech

requires a high-school diploma or equivalent for the positions but prefers candidates with college degrees.

Higgins said all the 350 positions will be filled as the company finds suitable workers.

She declined to say the starting pay for those positions but said the company pays competitive wages.

"We want to keep (our workers)," she said.
