

The logo for Santa Rosa's Press Gazette, featuring the text "Santa Rosa's Press" in a small font above the word "Gazette" in a large, bold, serif font.

County is wired over new jobs

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Santa Rosa County officials learned Thursday morning the addition of roughly 500 new jobs coming to the area.

Project Snake Eyes was unveiled at the Santa Rosa County Commission meeting as Clearwire Broadband Services will be adding 500 new jobs to bring its annual payroll in the county to around \$30-million.

"This is a big day for us," said Ferd Salomon, president of the TEAM Santa Rosa Board of directors. "We almost lost over 500 jobs and instead of just saving those jobs we now have a company who is adding 500 more.

"This is a gold medal day in the county when you look at some of the hard decisions the county has made is now beginning to bear fruit while we see what is going on with the current recession and 12 percent unemployment in the area."

Clearwire Broadband Services is a technical call center, which helps clients call to get assistance in matters like networking their homes.

Danny Cruz, who oversees the call center in located in the Santa Rosa County Industrial Park in East Milton, was very pleased with the outcome working with TEAM Santa Rosa and others in the area.

"TEAM Santa Rosa is the key to us expanding," Cruz said. "They helped bring everyone together when we thought we would have maxed out the workforce at our original goal of 350 people.

"With the efforts of TEAM, Locklin Vocational Tech, and Workforce EscaRosa we are seeing a much larger work force that we anticipated."

Cruz stressed Clearwire has ongoing recruitment efforts when it comes to its current work force, but they are expected to start ramping up for more agents sometime in October.

This announcement was a yearlong effort and the combining of several resources according to TEAM Santa Rosa Executive Director Cindy Anderson.

"We not only had to sell them on this being a great place to live, but a total environment," Anderson said. "It is one thing to go network a home, but when you have to tell them how to do it on the phone is another complete matter and that is where Workforce EscaRosa and Locklin Technical have played a critical role in this project.

"Also we used different grants and tax incentives through the state to make all of this possible."

One of those grants was through the state of Florida where Governor Charlie Crist saw the value of Clearwire to the area and helped with a \$2-million grant along with performance based grant dollars through Enterprise Florida.

The performance-based incentives through Enterprise Florida comes in returning tax dollars as they meet specific plateaus set forward.

While economic development might not ring that much of a bell to many, businesses and jobs do.

In the past year team reported items in its annual report along with Clearwire's announcement on Thursday the opening of H.T. Hackney, Quality Assurance which recently opened, the Blackwater Correctional Facility, Prestige Fire Systems, Gulf Coast Cable, FOSSCo, App River, and the news of 84 Lumber re-opening on Monday.

Anderson pointed out there are others who are currently looking at Santa Rosa County and what is available as industrial inventory.

"FOSSCo, which is located in Gulf Breeze and works with aircraft parts and also recycles them, is interested in the Whiting Aviation Park," Anderson noted. "There is another company that is already showing interest in the Northwest Florida Industrial Park.

"I know it might be hard to understand, but when we make some of the decision we do we are not just making these deals for us today but for our children in the future so they don't have to go anywhere to find work.

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