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Santa Rosa offering Clearwire training

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A Santa Rosa County vocational school is offering specialized training in hopes of getting students ready for work at an East Milton call center.

Locklin Tech in Milton is offering a three-week course in computer networking to get students ready for potential jobs at Clearwire, a call center that provides technical support for the company's wireless Internet service.

"We noticed that some of our students were going out to Clearwire and getting hired. We began talking to them, and we designed a course that's just the skill sets they need," said Wes Wesley, Locklin's information technology instructor.

The next course begins Oct. 27 and runs through Nov. 17. Although the program is geared toward Clearwire jobs, he said the training could be applicable to other jobs as well.

Joy Goll of Milton is set to finish the course today. She has a background in technology.

"I had heard really good things about Clearwire, that they are a really good company to work for," she said. "I've been looking for work for almost a year."

Clearwire has told Goll it could be late November or December before it hires more technicians. If Clearwire doesn't work out, she hopes to use the skills to work for other Internet providers.

The course costs \$200, plus books and fees, but people re-entering the job market after being laid off may qualify for federal funding through Workforce Escarosa, said Susan Nelms, the employment agency's executive director.

"If there is someone out there who had a job and has some sort of IT background, they can apply and we can help them go out to Locklin and get the training," Nelms said. "It will pay the full tuition ... and whatever they need to attend the training."

Cindy Anderson, the executive director of the TEAM Santa Rosa Economic Development Council, said the training may allow Clearwire to expand to as many as 500 employees.

"Clearwire had said, when they came (in 2007), that they would go to 350 and probably no more. They figured 350 would tap out our workforce in the skill set they would need," Anderson told members of the TEAM board of directors on Monday.

"We worked with Locklin to find out exactly what skill set was lacking. Locklin is now offering that specific curriculum. We are hoping (Clearwire) will be able to expand to 500."

Additional Facts

Want to get free training?

Step 1: Attend a Workforce Investment Act orientation at:

-- Workforce Escarosa One-Stop Center in Milton, 5735 U.S. 90, Milton. Offered every Wednesday at 10 a.m.

-- Workforce Escarosa One-Stop Center in Pensacola, 3670-A North L St., Pensacola. Offered every Wednesday at 9 a.m. and every Thursday at 2 p.m.

Step 2: At the conclusion of the orientation, potential applicants will set up an appointment with a career adviser who will work with them to proceed through the eligibility process.

Step 3: Complete paperwork and provide documentation to complete eligibility determination.

Details: Visit www.workforceescarosa.com/WIA.htm
