

Treat your talent well, recruiters say

RETENTION KEY AS RECESSION CLOUDS LIFT

By DARRELL SMITH
dvsmith@sacbee.com

The Sacramento region still has a long climb to reach recovery in 2011, but some employers already are considering how to retain the talent they have even as they struggle with layoffs or cautiously look to add new staff.

Recruiters say that will become even more important as the economy improves.

"Retention will be huge and companies maybe are not paying attention to that because they're so focused on the bottom line," said Amelya Stevenson, president of the Sacramento Human Resource Association.

More local firms say they expect to hire this year. Some firms in the tech and health care sectors are already beginning to make good on the promise. That means employees who rode out the recession could be looking for their openings, too.

"People have been extremely thankful that they've had a job, but now that things are blowing over, employers need to tell their employees - out loud - that they are thankful for their service," said Kim Parker, executive vice president of the California Employers Association.



Sacramento City College nursing student Julie Nickerson, left, and registered nurses Serena Williams and Carolyn Cords study a medical procedure in the Trauma Nursing Unit.

Siemens Mobility employs 750 workers at its south Sacramento plant and late last year landed a lucrative Amtrak contract that will add 200 more workers over the next two years.

But parent company Siemens AG didn't wait to acknowledge its current employees, doling out a nearly \$100 million "special payment" in December to its U.S. workers "for their extraordinary performance in a difficult time," said Siemens AG president and CEO Peter Loscher.

Employees are reading the news and seeing their employers' improving fortunes, said local market researcher

Rick Reed. They have survived the downturn with its budget cuts, wage freezes and layoffs and want to be rewarded for their perseverance.

"Exports are up in California and the U.S. banks are making record profits. Stocks are above 12,000. Employees are asking 'When does that reach the street?'" said Reed.

Employers are starting to hear the message. Average hourly earnings rose by 8 cents in January or \$3.20 over a 40-hour workweek, according to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, while wages have risen by nearly 2

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8 cents

Rise in average hourly earnings in January

2 percent

Increase in wages over the past year