

BusinessPlus

OPPORTUNITIES INSIDE

Our Super Sunday Jobs section allows potential employees to look at some opportunities. **Pages D4, D5**

SECTION D

SENIOR EDITOR/BUSINESS **JAMES MEIER** (760) 778-4623 or business@thedesertsun.com

Area employers offering seasonal jobs

Job fair at casino draws more than 1,200 people

By **Mike Perrault**
The Desert Sun

August's jobs report for the Coachella Valley and inland region was no cliffhanger. Hiring was again stagnant, prompting even more job-seekers to abandon their quest to find work, said Chapman University economist Esmel Adibi. Many job-seekers wonder if businesses are simply pausing in

the ailing economy, or if the lull marks a significant change in direction, Adibi said. In the Coachella Valley, an increase in some private-sector jobs, combined with more frustrated job seekers leaving the labor force, resulted in 700 fewer unemployed residents in August, economists and analysts said. But there are jobs out there, particularly at restaurants, resorts and golf clubs that are gearing up for the fall season. Hundreds of job-seekers recently applied at Kaiser Restaurant Group's two-day job fair at Jackalope Ranch in Indio. Kaiser was looking to fill dozens

of positions at Jackalope Ranch, The Chop House in Palm Desert, and Hog's Breath Inn in La Quinta. Indio resident Delfina Romo was among attendees who said it's a difficult economy, but that's no reason to stop looking. First Solar's job fair at Spotlight 29 Casino in August drew more than 1,200 people. Among them was La Quinta resident Richard Crytzer, who has experience as a wind turbine technician. "Solar isn't going away," he said. Bighorn Golf Club's job fair earlier this month drew 430 applicants for 25 jobs.

Other sites seeking applicants over the summer included Lulu California Bistro in Palm Springs, Chipotle in Palm Desert, and Fantasy Springs Resort Casino in Indio. Over the past year, the inland region's trade, transportation and utilities sector added 5,800 jobs, wholesale trade increased by 1,800 jobs and retail gained 1,300 positions, EDD reported. The inland region's education and health services field was up 2,700 jobs in the past year, and the net year-over-year gain for professional and business services was 1,700 jobs. The manufacturing industry

added 1,600 jobs in August statewide, and there are signs activity is picking up. **Some increases** Darren Hager, regional vice-president for staffing company Robert Half International, said his firm has seen a rise in leisure and hospitality jobs in recent months, as well as growth in the professional and business services sector. The state's August employment report reinforces Hager's observation. The Inland Empire — spanning Riverside and San Bernardino **Please see JOBS, D7**



Debra Gruszecki & K Kaufmann
ALL ABOUT BUSINESS

Center to offer kids fitness power

Alison Vaughn has been training champion gymnasts since she was 24 and one of the youngest Olympic coaches in the country. Now 32, Vaughn is setting out to get kids in the Coachella Valley in shape with her new business, PowerKids Center in Palm Desert. Vaughn and her business partner, Jeannette Frederick, have taken over the 14,000-square-foot space formerly known as Action Gymnastics and are already teaching classes.

"It was a dream come true," Vaughn said of starting the business. "One of the things I wanted to do is really inspire kids. We see how kids light up when they come to the gym." The PowerKids name is "about power within, the power of an athlete, the power of play," she said.

Things will really be hopping by the gym's grand opening Oct. 15, when Vaughn and Frederick unveil their in-floor trampoline and pit system.

Kids will be able to bounce off the trampoline into one of two big foam-filled pits — that is if Vaughn and Frederick can keep the parents off it.

"It's pretty state of the art," Vaughn said, "so we're thrilled to have it."

And Vaughn said she already has a potential Olympian among her students — 9-year-old Sage Brown of La Quinta.

The young gymnast trains 32 hours a week and next month will try out for the National Talent Opportunity Program (TOP), the national training program for future Olympic gymnasts.

Not child's play

Speaking of kid power, Vaughn and Frederick are getting a hand promoting their new business from Susan Behrends, publisher — with her husband John Behrends — of the Desert Kids Directory, the indispensable monthly guide to children's and family activities in the valley.

What's surprising about her business, Susan Behrends said, is that it runs more on a school-year calendar than the valley's business and tourism cycle.

"I pick up in the spring and summer when there are kids' activities," she said. "I sell out."

But even in the slow times, she said, she uses the directory's community calendar to build brand and visibility.

"I'm a former teacher," she said. "I truly see this as a resource for the local kids' businesses. To get them promoted out here is a tough job."

The big GreenChill

Valley supermarkets are doing **Please see ALL ABOUT, D7**



Desert Adventures Jeep Tours owner/operator Bob Schneider (left) and Shields Date Gardens general manager Mark Goulet (right) are photographed together at the Indio, Calif. date gardens on September 15, 2011. The pair have teamed up to make Shields a pickup and dropoff point for jeep tours and expand tour-goers Coachella Valley experience. **CRYSTAL CHATHAM/THE DESERT SUN**

Team-up helps create a better ride

Desert Adventures Jeep Tours forms deal with Shields Date Gardens

By **Debra Gruszecki**
The Desert Sun

Consider it a Jeep Date. Beginning Oct. 1, Desert Adventures Jeep Tours will use Shields Date Gardens as its main pickup spot for jeep tours to the San Andreas Fault and Painted Hills/Mystery Canyon.

Executives of the two attractions call the move a win-win.

Until now, the jeep tour pickup point had been the dusty, wind-blown Metate Ranch.

Some customers felt squeamish, uncomfortable waiting there. They had a tough time finding the remote location. They worried about leaving their cars.

"This is a much more pleasant experience for guests all the way around," said Desert Adventures co-owner Bob Schneider. "It's an easy place to get to, and find. They can go in and have a date shake, buy some fruit or stop in The Café at Shields. It's good for them, and us."

Mark Goulet, general manager of Shields Date Gardens off Highway 111, called the combination a great way to make the spot more of a destination.



The Shields Date Gardens patio restaurant is photographed on September 15, 2011. **CRYSTAL CHATHAM/THE DESERT SUN**

"It adds variety to the excursion," he said. Desert Adventures, while keeping intact hotel pickups for some of its tours, expects to bring several thousand people to this part of Indio as part of the new stop.

Visibility for Desert Adventures should increase, too.

Seeing red jeeps barreling along valley streets like Highway 111 and Monroe is splashy, and fun for tourists. "It's good advertising," Schneider said.

"It's a great idea," Indio resident Theresa Vasquez said as she stepped into the café for breakfast. "It'll help tourists see something other than our hotels and pools."

"Our goal is to get them in the door, and have them stay a while," Goulet said.

To that, Shields will soon open a new garden on the historic date orchard. Owned by The Jewel Date Co., Shields has been in business in the desert since 1924.

Please see TEAM-UP, D7

INSIDE BUSINESS



INSIDE THE BOTIQUE
Anna Risnes and her family run the Tarah Jade Botique in La Quinta. **D3**

A NEW WAY TO ORDER

Stacked, which has two locations in California and is set to open a third in October, is one of many eateries now using technology — specifically iPads or other tablet computers — to serve customers. **D3**

FINDING SUCCESS

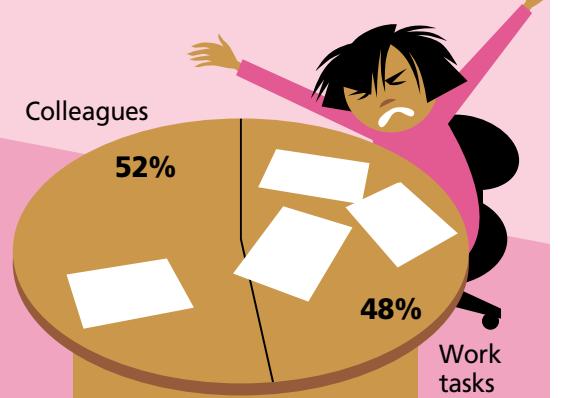
Aspiretech, a nonprofit in Highland Park, Ill., nurtures the skills of the autistic while forgiving the quirks that can make adults with autism unemployable. **D3**

CORRECTIONS

We correct errors of fact promptly and courteously. If you have a correction or clarification, please contact Senior Editor for Business James Meier at (760) 778-4623 or at james.meier@thedesertsun.com

BUSINESS FACT

Which is the more stress-inducing aspect of your job?



SOURCE: Princess Cruises Relaxation Report survey of 1,005 adults 18 and older

Declines impact renters

By Julie Schmit and Barbara Hansen
USA TODAY

More renters found housing unaffordable last year as incomes declined, and more are likely to be squeezed this year, given rising rents.

The share of renters paying 30 percent or more of their household income on housing costs — the government threshold to determine if housing is unaffordable — rose to 53 percent last year from 51.5 percent in 2009 and about 50 percent in 2008, according to 2010 Census data released today.

While median rents remained stable last year at \$855 a month, median national household incomes, adjusted for inflation, fell 2.2 percent — putting the squeeze on renter budgets.

The share of renter households spending half or more of their income on housing rose to 27.4 percent last year from 26.4 percent in 2009, while the share of homeowners with mortgages in the same situation rose to 15.1 percent from 14.7 percent, the data show.

“Americans continue to struggle to pay for housing, especially renters,” says Daniel McCue, research manager at Harvard University’s Joint Center for Housing Studies.

Last year, 38 percent of homeowners with a mortgage paid 30 percent or more for housing. That was up only slightly from 37.6 percent in 2009, Census data show.

Yet, the fact that percentage rose at all shows that many homeowners haven’t been able to refinance mortgages, despite near record low interest rates, McCue says. Refinancing generally lowers monthly mortgage payments.

The Census Bureau’s definition of housing costs includes mortgage payments, insurance, taxes and utilities.

Renters will face higher costs this year, says Stan Humphries, economist for real estate website Zillow.

Nationwide, rents are expected to rise about 4 percent this year, Humphries says, and will also rise in 2012. Strong demand is driving rents up as homeowners lose homes to foreclosure and become renters.

Skittish consumers are also delaying home purchases, given concerns about the economy.

The renter household market was fairly stable from 1990 to 2006, McCue says. But since 2006, when housing prices peaked, the number of renter households in the U.S. has grown each year.



Desert Adventures Jeep Tours owner/operator Bob Schneider (left) and Shields Date Gardens general manager Mark Goulet (right) talk through a coordinated marketing effort and discuss merchandising at the Indio date gardens on Thursday, September 15, 2011. CRYSTAL CHATHAM/THE DESERT SUN

TEAM-UP

Continued from D1

Located south of the canopied patio adjacent to The Café at Shields, the date grove garden includes a large water attraction and areas to enjoy the desert

landscape.

Visitors also can take in the classic movie, “Romance & Sex Life of The Date,” in Shields’ vintage theater — a 15-minute film that helps gauge tourist visits.

“We judge it by the date shakes we sell,” Goulet said.

“In season, we sell about 400 shakes a day.”

“Our mission is to increase that number substantially,” he added.

Debra Gruszecki covers tourism, CVEP and Indian gaming for The Desert Sun. She can be reached at Debra.Gruszecki@thedesertsun.com or (760) 778-4643.

ALL ABOUT

Continued from D1

their bit for the planet — and their bottom lines — by taking part in the Environmental Protection Agency’s GreenChill Partnership.

The very cool program — pun definitely intended — helps chains such as Albertsons, Fresh and Easy and Sprouts Farmers Markets plug up leaks in their refrigeration systems, which in turns cuts down on major greenhouse gas emissions. It’s a big deal because the gases used for refrigeration are anywhere from 2 to 4,000 times more potent as greenhouse gases than regular old carbon dioxide, said Ray Saracino, industry clean energy official for EPA’s California region.

The average refrigeration system “leaks 25 percent of its gases on a yearly basis,” he said. “So GreenChill partners take a pledge to work on leakage rate and bring down by half.”

And he said, refrigeration gases are very expensive, so plugging the leaks saves stores money while helping the environment.

The payoff — beyond dollars and cents — Albertsons, Sprouts and Fresh and Easy all recently received special recognition for their efforts

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- **PowerKids Center:** 77-962 Palapas Road, Palm Desert. Grand opening, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Oct. 15. Information: (760) 346-4446
- **Desert Kids’ Directory:** 78734 Links Drive, Palm Desert. Information: (760) 636-4235 or www.desertkidsdirectory.com.
- **GreenChill Partnership Program:** Information: www.epa.gov/greenchill
- **AudioVisions:** 75-430 Gerald Ford Drive, Suite 201, Palm Desert. Information: (760) 340-4555

at the EPA’s GreenChill Awards.

Both Sprouts, with a store in La Quinta, and Supervalu, the parent company of Albertsons, which has several stores in the valley, won Environmental Achievement Awards.

Fresh & Easy won an award for converting 14 stores to GreenChill in the past year, more than any other chain, though none of those store are local, according to company officials.

Getting plugged in

Calling all Apple Jacks and Jills!

AudioVisions in Palm Desert has your i-gadgets.

The purveyor of high-tech home entertainment and energy management systems on Thursday debuted its upgraded showroom, now equipped with iPad and iPhone-linked thermostat, lighting and entertainment

system controls.

“We’re mounting iPads and iPod Touches in the wall so you have a dynamic key pad,” said Jim Coleman, store manager. “There’s more functionality.”

Wireless customers can download music and videos straight to their televisions and even log in and control the lighting and AC in the AudioVisions showroom, he said.

Coleman’s also out to overcome market resistance to 3D television with eye-popping, super-large screen systems, he said.

The minimum screen size for 3D to work at home is 92 inches, he said, with 123-inch and 155-inch screens available.

It’s all pricey but Coleman said the valley’s upscale shoppers are ready to spend. AudioVision’s sales are up 20 percent over last year, and he anticipates a good season.

JOBS

Continued from D1

counties — added 3,500 jobs in professional and business services over the past month, state officials reported.

Companies in the area also filled 2,900 administrative and support, and waste services jobs, as well as another 700 in the scientific and technical services field, the EDD reported.

The increase in some private-sector jobs, combined with more people leaving the labor force, helped push the inland region’s jobless rate down to 14.1 percent in August from a revised 14.7 percent in July, the EDD reported. But the region still saw a net loss of 1,400 non-farm and 2,500 agricul-

ture jobs last month.

Economists such as Adibi said having fewer people participate in the labor force is obviously not the way the inland region and state want to keep unemployment down.

The state’s fiscal woes, deep budget cuts and the loss of government jobs have been a big factor in the region’s poor job creation, analysts said.

About 3,900 government jobs were cut over the past month in the inland region, and 12,600 have been slashed since August 2010, the EDD reported.

Compounding the problem is the fact the inland region and Coachella Valley were among the hardest hit in the real estate sector, economists said.

At the same time, companies have pushed up productivity levels and have learned to do more with less, staffing specialists said.

Statewide, payrolls fell by 8,400 in August, sending the state’s unemployment rate to 12.1 percent from 12 percent in July.

It’s the second-highest jobless rate in the nation, behind Nevada at 13.4 percent.

Meanwhile, the national unemployment rate has been stuck at about 9 percent since January, economists said, as the economy added no net new jobs in August.

The government sector, construction, information and financial activities all shed jobs last month, the EDD reported.

THE TRUTH ABOUT SHORT SALES

Most Loan Modifications do not work!
Not all Short Sales work!
NOT everyone is a Short Sale expert.

You need someone that understands the process.
You need someone who puts YOUR interests first!
You Can get on with the rest of your life

Don’t pay **UP-FRONT** fees in a Loan Modification!
In a properly handled Short Sale, the Seller may pay virtually **NO FEES!**
HAFA & other programs may help you to receive moving costs, up to \$3000!
Find out why you should **ALWAYS** pay your HOA dues.
Yes, you can Short Sale your home without missing a payment.
You may be able to buy a home sooner than you might think!
Some Lenders may even allow Short Sales with a lease back of YOUR home to YOU!

THE BANKS GOT THEIR BAILOUT! NOW IT IS YOUR TURN!

Call Michael Schwartz! I specialize in Short Sales!
I have closed over 95% of all my short sales in the past four years!
I handle my own files. I will negotiate the sale for you! You will get updates directly from me!

YOU can avoid Foreclosure and get on with YOUR life!
Make YOUR Short Sale a **SCHWARTZ** sale!
I’m Michael Schwartz. It’s YOUR move!
Expect the BEST, get the BEST!

To Contact Me For More Info, Download any FREE Barcode reading app from any smartphone’s App Store and scan this code.



Call Michael Schwartz at
760-899-5632
for a **FREE** consultation
CA License # 01477963
Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage
michaelschwartz@dc.rr.com
www.4YOURmove.com



Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage is not associated with the government and our service is not approved by the government or your lender. If you stop paying your mortgage, you could lose your home and damage your credit rating.



PACIFIC PREMIER
BANK

GREAT RATES ARE ALWAYS A GOOD CONVERSATION STARTER. LET’S TALK.™

1.00% APY
12 MONTH CD
WITH \$10,000 MIN. OPENING DEPOSIT

PPBI.COM
LET’S TALK.™

CALL (888) 610-1842

Costa Mesa ■ Cypress-Los Alamitos ■ Huntington Beach ■ Newport Beach ■ Palm Desert
Palm Springs-Tahquitz ■ Palm Springs-Smoke Tree ■ San Bernardino ■ Seal Beach

Annual Percentage Yields (APY) are accurate as of September 25, 2011. Fees could reduce earnings on accounts. An early withdrawal fee may be imposed for CD accounts.



DS-0000282359

Recession Recovery For the Desert
**VALLEYWIDE
EMPLOYMENT
EXPO**

Employers there’s still
time to reserve your booth!

**Date Festival Fairgrounds, Indio
Fullenwider Auditorium
Wednesday, October 5th, 2011
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM**

For employer registration visit our
website <http://www.DesertJobExpo.com>

Or Call (760) 863-2965
or (760) 863-2510

Presented by **The Desert Sun**
*The Desert Sun, KESQ TV-3, Desert Business
Machines, R&R Broadcasting Group, State of
California EDD, Riverside County EDA, and Riverside
County DPSS, City of Indio, Audio Visions, La Quinta
Costco, and Indio Starbucks*

DS-0000281395