

Recent Developments

Topic: Successful Employment Transitions Web Site

Numerous families are trying to keep their lives together after one or more primary breadwinners have lost their jobs. The national unemployment rate in September 2002 was 5.6 percent (Garner and Thilmany 2002), and threats of additional layoffs keep families on edge. Almost 10 million people are trying to find jobs (Beauprez 2002).

Data through September 2002 indicated a 55 percent rise in foreclosures. Since the wealth of many Americans is mainly in their homes, the retirement security of older people may be threatened. As a result, individuals who are between 55 and 64 are staying in the labor force and many have delayed their retirement. (Garner and Thilmany 2002).

Not only is unemployment high, across the country, personal bankruptcies from April through June 2002 were up 5.9 percent over the previous three months. Bankruptcy filings are at an all time high -- 1.47 million (McGhee 2002).

Analysis

An initiative team working for Colorado State Cooperative Extension established an integrated Web site to help people looking for work. On-line: <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/emptrans/index.html>. Information is organized by five categories:

1. Featured Issues
2. Information Resources
3. Educational Programs and Resources
4. Internet Resources
5. Know Your Labor Market.

Job seekers can use the Internet Resources to apply for unemployment insurance, learn about food stamps and other food programs, and to link directly to information about health insurance. They can look on-line for jobs in Colorado and throughout the country, and they can get help with job search techniques.

A series of information sheets are available in the Information Resource section that are specifically designed to answer questions such as "Keeping Up With Bills During a Job Transition," "Tips for a Successful Interview," and "Life Between Jobs is Challenging."

Each month a new feature addresses issues that challenge those who are unemployed. The September and October features coping strategies during employment transition.

References

Beauprez, Jennifer. 2002, October 1. Families being hit hard, AFL-CIO survey says. Denver Post, p. 5C.

Garner, Elizabeth, and Dawn Thilmany. 2002. *Current economic and employment trends*. On-line: <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/emptrans/feature0211.html>.

McGhee, Tom. 2002, August 15. Bankruptcy hits home. Denver Post, p. 2C.

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Topic: Home Modifications for Older Adults

Older adults are more prone to falling. The selection of floor treatments is extremely important when designing living spaces for older adults because of the relationship of flooring surfaces and falling. Some surfaces are simply safer and easier for older adults to negotiate. This article investigated the use of commercial-grade carpet and its relationship to balance in older healthy adults by measuring two items -- postural sway and balance strategy. They tested participants in both carpeted and non-carpeted conditions for comparison. Researchers found that the commercial carpet did not significantly affect the postural sway of the participants. They did find

some statistical differences in the balance strategy. Researchers suggest that further study is needed, particularly with a sample of older adults who have a history of falling.

Implications for Extension

Family and Consumer Science educators have been actively involved in teaching home modifications for older adults for many years. The purpose of this education is to create safer living environments that promote independence. This study provides information regarding recommendations for floor coverings that educators can use in their educational programs.

Reference

Dickson, Joan I., JoAnn L. Shroyer, and Jefferey W. Elias. 2002. The influence of commercial-grade carpet on postural sway and balance strategy among older adults. *The Gerontologist*. 42:552-559.

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