



Marine base expansion to create up to 600 new jobs

Eunice Lee, Staff Writer

July 13, 2009

BARSTOW • Despite an overall flagging economy, business is booming at the Marine Corps Logistics Base — so much so that officials say they are looking to immediately hire between 400 to 600 workers.

The positions will mainly be temporary one year, entry-level positions at the MCLB's Maintenance Center in Yermo, according to Frank Alston, head of the center's production department.

The positions, mostly vehicle maintenance, will range in wages from \$17 to \$30 an hour, according to Michael Holtz, workforce development specialist at the San Bernardino County Department of Workforce Development office in Hesperia.

To fill the positions, the county workforce development office and the MCLB will be holding a job fair Friday where on-site skills experts will be screening potential candidates to help expedite the MCLB's hiring process.

According to Alston, the base has switched into emergency hiring mode because it needs to get more workers — and fast.

The need for maintenance workers at the MCLB has surged as an increasing number of tanks, Humvees and other vehicles return from Iraq and Afghanistan needing new parts or repair work before being shipped off, he said.

The Maintenance Center currently has about 1,200 workers, according to Matt Nowicki, an MCLB customer service representative.

This isn't the first time that the MCLB has done large-scale emergency hiring, according to Alston. About four years ago, the base hired 287 workers within a 45-day window, he said. Most of the workers continued onto permanent positions, Alston noted.

The Maintenance Center in Yermo is one of only two vehicle servicing locations for the Marine Corps, according to Holtz. The other is located in Albany, Ga., and is working at maximum capacity at 24-hours, seven days a week. The Maintenance Center in Yermo operates one shift, five days a week, and may be poised to add another shift, Holtz said.

While the positions are labeled as temporary, Bill Goodson, president of U.S. Logistics, a new contractor with the MCLB that will be responsible for creating up to 200 of the new jobs, said there's a good chance the positions will extend past one year.

He pointed to the fact that U.S. Logistics has signed a three-year contract with the MCLB.

"Right now, it's strictly a matter of expansion," he said.

Contact the writer:

(760) 256-4122 or elee@desertdispatch.com