

PostNet offers free résumé, fax services for job seekers

By *BETSY COHEN* of the *Missoulian*

The latest labor data shows Montana's unemployment rate has ticked upward this fall, from 6.6 percent in September to 6.7 percent in October. At the Missoula Job Service, the scarcity of new offers for job seekers is at an unprecedented low. And nationwide, the unemployment rate last month hit double digits for only the second time since World War II.

Yet amidst the grim news, there are some bright spots in this year of the recession, this year of layoffs.

In Missoula, Linda and John Yovetich, are two such points of hope.

PostNet, the couple's printing, graphic design and shipping business on North Reserve Street, is offering every unemployed Missoula resident the opportunity to print 10 free copies of his or her résumé and cover letter on high-quality paper. The shop will also offer free faxing to two local numbers per day and 50 free networking cards.

Their largesse might seem like a business gimmick, another way to raise the shop's profile. Certainly, it attracts attention.

But in truth, the offer was borne out of the couple's own unemployment experience. They once stood in the same spot where many residents of western Montana find themselves today: downsized, laid off, desperate for work and a regular paycheck.

It's an awful, depressing place to be, John said, explaining he was there in 2003 when he lost his high-paying job with IBM in Arizona.

That life and that time is now far behind the couple, who returned to Missoula in 2005 to open a franchise in the town where John grew up. But it's because of those raw days that they are now reaching out and lending a hand.

"The stories we are hearing from some of our customers are heartbreaking," Linda said. "One lady has been unemployed for five weeks, and she is in the medical industry where the jobs supposedly are. We helped another lady who had just been laid off the day before and when she came in, she was in shock."

"We are just trying to be there for people, and give them the guidance and services they need to get going again," she said. "Free résumé printing can mean a lot for someone who's lost their job."

It may seem like rhetoric, a Pollyanna spin on a bad situation to view unemployment as an opportunity, John said. Such enthusiasm in dire times may seem a bit contrived.

However, it's not, John said. He's living proof.

"It is an opportunity to look at your life going forward and pursue your dreams," he said. "I always wanted to own my own business and I never would have taken the chance if I hadn't been laid off.

"You get so tied into the benefits and health insurance at a job that you don't look beyond that. I was just too afraid the cost to be self-insured was too expensive,



Linda and husband John Yovetich bought a PostNet franchise in Missoula after John was laid off from his job in Arizona. The couple offers free resumes and faxes to unemployed job hunters in Missoula. "We are just trying to be there for people, and give them the guidance and services they need to get going again," says Linda. Photo by Linda Thompson/Missoulian

and that's why I never considered opening a business."

After weeks of job hunting came to dead ends, the couple decided the time had come to plunge into the dream John had long put on hold.

With time on his hands, John used the Internet to search for a franchise business that would support his dream life - a job with regular business hours, no travel, a work life that allowed for more time with Linda and their two children, and more time to spend with his aging parents.

The change didn't come without challenges or growing pains, but in the end, the decision to uproot a 20-year life in Arizona, come home and start a business has been worth the bumps in the road.

Unemployment, Linda said, changed their family's life - for the better.

"When you are unemployed, you have to pick yourself up and find the courage to open yourself up to new opportunities," she said. "The opportunity was given to us. We took it and others can, too."

Their offer to help fellow Missoula residents stands as long as there is critical need, Linda said.

"We will provide these services indefinitely. As long as the need is there we will do this," she said. "Hopefully the need won't be there forever."

Being prepared to jump on opportunities is critical for job seekers in this tight market, said Wolf Ametsbichler, director of Missoula Job Service. That means having one's resume and contact information at the ready.

"It is important to be fast and responsive to a job opening because they get filled quickly," Ametsbichler said, pointing out that the Missoula Job Service also helps people with résumés and cover letters.

While the job market is particularly tight right now, optimism is alive and well that the new year will bring new opportunities.

"We expect some of the stimulus money will hit then, and projects will get under way," Ametsbichler said. "We are hopeful there will be more jobs."