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## Find a job with Journal-News: Roofer starts apprenticeship program

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**FAIRFIELD** — A Fairfield roofing company, struggling to find experienced workers, is taking the matter into its own hands by starting an apprenticeship program.

Ray St. Clair Roofing Inc. is taking advantage of the slower winter months for home repair by hiring about 15 people to train in an all-new, in-house program, said Controller Tom Grabo. Experienced roofers, siders and window installers are becoming more difficult to find, he said.

"Unemployment has gone down, so quality people are harder and harder to find. So if we can't find expert people who are experienced roofers, we'll go out and create them," Grabo said. "We're trying something new."

The third generation, family-owned roofing business is recruiting applicants at two upcoming job fairs.

The first event is from 9 a.m. to noon Wednesday, Jan. 13, at OhioMeansJobs-Butler County, the job center located at 4631 Dixie Hwy.

A second job fair will be held from 9 a.m. to noon Jan. 27, also at OhioMeansJobs-Butler, said Melissa O'Brien, business services liaison for the center.

OhioMeansJobs has applications for interested job seekers and is helping with the screening process, O'Brien said.

Reach the job center at 513-785-6500 to apply.

Ray St. Clair is hiring because sales are growing. Hopes are new roofers will help the business increase capacity to meet customer demands and win new business, Grabo said. Typical busy months are between April and October. But these job openings are not seasonal positions, Grabo added.

"The economy is doing better and people are doing more home repairs," he said. "We are looking to hire people that will be with our company 10 years from now."

Applicants need the physical ability to go up and down ladders, work outdoors in rain and heat, and the willingness to learn a new trade.

Pay for apprentices starts at \$11 an hour. According to Grabo, workers are eligible for a \$1 raise after 90 days, and a second \$1 raise after a one-year period. Tools are provided. Long-term employees are also eligible for annual merit raises, he said.

"We need to have people that are serious about learning a trade and wanting to be with a company for a long period of time," he said.

According to economic experts and local government agencies that provide job matching services, unemployment has fallen enough that the job market no longer favors the employer, the Journal-News reported last month.

Unemployment rates in Ohio (now 5.2 percent) and Greater Cincinnati are sitting at the lowest levels since 2001.

"I think the tide is now turning to job seekers," George Mokrzan, director of economics for Columbus-based Huntington Bancshares Inc., recently told this news outlet. "I think these unemployment rates have dropped to such a low level, businesses are going to start having a hard time finding the qualified workers that they need."

### ABOUT THIS COLUMN

Looking for a job? Every Sunday, we'll report on new job opportunities in the community including companies hiring, how to apply, training programs and other economic trends that can affect your job search. Contact reporter Chelsey Levingston with suggestions at [chelsey.levingston@coxinc.com](mailto:chelsey.levingston@coxinc.com). Also let us know if you land that job.

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