

Eager Job Applicants

South Orange County Community College District at the Anaheim/OC Job Fair Expo

By Ettie Graham



There were over 5,000 job seekers at the Job Fair Expo

Eddie Campa, below left and Jenne George, right, were two of thousands of job seekers at Wednesday's event.



- Orange County's unemployment rate was 8.5% in March 2009
- To see more photos from the job fair visit the HR department's Facebook page

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Competition with thousands of jobless makes the job hunt tougher for a larger pool of job seekers.

The job search is taking a toll on Eddie Campa of Colton. He's been searching for an accounting job for more than three months after he got laid off from his accounting management position at Nova Meridian Academy earlier this year. Luckily, his wife still has her steady teaching job at a local high school. Campa's job was cut as part of a massive layoff at the charter school due to state budget cuts.

So, the well dressed and pleasantly mannered, seasoned manager from the Inland Empire found himself standing in a long line outside the doors to the pavilion at the Anaheim Garden Walk early today, waiting more than an hour to get a chance to speak with prospective employers at the OC/Anaheim Job Fair Expo.

"Being out of work has been difficult and frustrating" said Campa, who, before he was laid off was in the process of adopting a child from Haiti with his wife. Although the adoption plans are still on, he said losing his job makes it even more difficult. He added, "I've been on interviews, but because of all the competition for jobs, I'm thinking about completely reinventing myself with other talents I have."

Campa joined thousands who turned out for today's job fair event held in

Anaheim. The event underscored the eagerness, if not outright desperation of rising unemployment and a prolonged recession which is increasing the number of job seekers. Many of the people that we spoke with at our booth had stories to tell about unemployment periods that were lasting too long.

The mass of applicants was decidedly dressed for the part: shirts and ties, business suits, and skirts were commonplace.

"They're dressed to impress potential employers," observed Ruth Ruiz, Public Information Specialist and one of the organizers for the Anaheim City sponsored event. "By last count we estimate that over 5,000 eager job seekers have come here today."

"To be realistic, there are more applicants than there are jobs available," said Ruiz. California's unemployment rate soared to 11.2 percent in March – more than double the pre-recession rate. Orange County's jobless rate was 8.5 percent.

Jenne George of Long Beach, was another job seeker that came to today's event. The unemployed mother of a seven year old boy is trying to find a job to support her family. She,

too, is a casualty of a recent layoff from a real estate investment trust company. She is looking for work as an administrative assistant. She's afraid that if she does not get work soon she will fall behind on house payments.

She's already down to the "bare necessities" and limiting any unnecessary expenses. George heard about the job fair and decided she had to go – even though all the competition is difficult to deal with.

"I need work," George said, clutching a bag filled with job applications and brochures. "I've been looking for more than three months and I'm fighting the discouragement of not getting call backs. Every day, I have to ask, what's wrong with me that no employer calls me back?"

SOCCCD's booth had a constant stream of eager applicants. We were honored to be part of such a positive effort to reach out to job seekers. Ruben Ramirez, Sokha Song and Ettie Graham represented the District at the event.