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## Hot Jobs | ‘Thriving tech industry’ – Local company leaders say available IT jobs outnumber qualified applicants

By Ronald Fisher

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Sourcereer President Adam Murphy (left) is shown with software engineers Jackson Bower (center) and Phil Rohanna on Tuesday, Nov. 20, 2017.

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Sourcereer president and founder Adam Murphy said his technology company is steadily looking for people to hire and develop, but also faces some challenges in attracting qualified candidates.

That is the story for many companies seeking to fill local information technology positions.

# **HOT JOBS**

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“We constantly have new positions becoming available and filling them,” Murphy said. “What we are looking for is DevOps positions – people that can develop and maintain operations at the same time.

“Right now we’re operating under the mindset that when we find good people we are going to hire them, whether we have a position available or not,” he said. “We are going to create a position for anyone that we find that has the right skill set. It’s so tough to come by anymore and hard to fill around here that we’re not going to let someone escape our grasp once we get somebody in here that looks good.”

Sourcereer, located in Ebensburg, provides a range of software development as well as systems engineering services for the government, commercial companies and the intelligence community.

As his company continues to see growth, Murphy said it’s imperative to stay ahead of the hiring game.

“We can’t grow unless we fill the spots,” he said. “So we can’t get more work unless we fill these positions.”



With a small pool of local qualified applicants, Murphy said competition can become pretty intense among companies.

“We’re trying do our best and not pull people from the other local companies and steal their talent,” he said. “We’re really trying to relocate folks from other areas either back to this area or (to) remotely work from their home and come here sometimes as needed.

“We don’t want to be a detriment to the other employers in the area.”

### Keeping talent here

While Murphy remains optimistic that his company will continue to find qualified candidates, he hopes to see more of the area’s youth stay local to learn about the opportunities in their own backyards before leaving the region.

Walt Hutsky, IT manager for Precision Business Solutions, believes the need to retain the region’s talent in general is as important as keeping the region’s youth local.

“We’re finding that a lot of the more experienced people in IT move on from the area for the most part,” he said. “The talent pool that’s out there now consists of mainly candidates from local colleges. We hire a lot of them as well, but we have a need for more highly skilled IT workers.

“A lot of our growth right now is in cybersecurity, and it’s hard to find experienced workers that our in the area and looking for jobs.”

Precision Business Solutions is based in Ebensburg and seeing continued growth.

“We’ve been hiring a person at least every few months,” Hutsky said. “It’s getting tough to find somebody to even bring in for an interview that meets our qualifications and even getting the candidates to apply is a challenge.

“There’s so much opportunity for us out there with what we’re doing in cybersecurity, compliance services, cloud services and things like that,” he said. “I just see it continuing to grow more and more. It’s just getting tough to find candidates that can help with that expansion to keep us moving in that direction.”

Hutsky said sometimes recruiting doesn’t end with the available job, but also includes the quality of life that comes with living in the area.

“There’s a lot of perks to the Johnstown area that people don’t really think about,” he said. “When you look at other cities and other areas this is such a nice place to live and raise a family. Cambria County has a lot to offer.”

‘The right candidates’

In-Shore Technologies, located in Johnstown, is another Cambria County technology company seeking candidates for employment.

Mike Stohon, the company’s president, said the tech firm has been fortunate to find qualified employees throughout the years, but it does become difficult at times.

“I’m always looking for candidates and I’m happy to say that we got to that point,” Stohon said. “When we had three or four employees that wasn’t always the case, but we’re pushing close to 50 employees now and as a result I’m always sourcing new talent. I truly am.

“I just hired a guy that started (Tuesday),” he said. “We’ve always been blessed with having a great workforce, but at the same time it does get challenging to find the right people at times. Whether it be the skill that you’re looking for in general or the right type of people skills that we would like to see.”

The three company leaders agreed that awareness plays a huge role in getting people to apply for the available positions.

“When people hear unemployment they think ‘Oh, there’s no jobs out there,’ but the opposite is true at times,” Stohon said. “There are jobs out there, it’s just finding the right candidates for them.”

Hutsky said: “In the past, there weren’t a lot of positions like this in the area. Some people are even surprised that we exist. If people really took the time to look in the area, they would find that there’s a need for people like them to work.

“I think this area is turning the corner and a lot of tech is filling in where a lot of the older jobs in manufacturing, steel working and the mines have disappeared.

“The takeaway is that there is a thriving tech industry here and it keeps getting bigger.”

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Ronald Fisher is a reporter for The Tribune-Democrat. Follow him on Twitter @FisherSince\_82.

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