

65,000 seek work at VW

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By: Mike Pare

Pamela Glant of Chattanooga says she sought a production job with Volkswagen's local auto assembly plant to improve her standard of living.

"I think I could do the work and I'd like to be tested," she said.

Ms. Glant is one of 35,000 people who applied for the 1,200 production jobs over the past three weeks, the company said Monday.

About 30,000 others have applied for the 800 professional and skilled maintenance slots so far, according to VW.

"We are overwhelmed by the response and we are very satisfied with the result," said Hans-Herbert Jagla, executive vice president of human resources for VW's Chattanooga operations. "It gives us the confidence that we will be able to hire all the capable and flexible people we need to build our cars safely and with the highest quality."

Late Sunday, VW closed a three-week application window for the production jobs. The plant is slated to start making cars in early 2011 and employ 2,000 people.

Ryan Rose, VW's general manager of human resources in Chattanooga, said the next step for the production jobs is an assessment process.

"We ask all applicants to be patient, as we begin the hiring for the first positions in spring 2010 and will continue into 2011," he said.

Applicants will be scheduled for an individual assessment, according to VW. This includes computer and behavioral testing as well as production simulation at a location near the Enterprise South industrial park plant site, VW officials said.

Then, Mr. Jagla said, there will be an interview, medical tests and a job offer.

"We need to build a hiring pool," he said.

Production workers will start at \$14.50 per hour, growing to \$19.50 per hour over three years, officials said. The company offers a comprehensive benefits package, they said.

Mr. Jagla said first priority for hiring will be given to Chattanooga and Hamilton County residents.

Mr. Rose said a kind of lottery process will be used to determine the application evaluation sequence.

"Everyone who applies and meets the minimum qualifications will be given an equal chance," Mr. Rose said.

VW has hired over 220 people so far for non-production jobs.

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