

# Hiring forecast



HEIDI HEILBRUNN / Staff

Colleen Murray, a recruiter for Human Technologies, Inc., was recently hired for her position.

## Economists still seeing slow but steady recovery

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Economists see a developing trend that could portend well for Greenville County, with unemployment here likely to track below the national average in 2011.

Clemson University economist Bruce Yandle told *The Greenville News* that the auto industry is driving job growth in the county as it slowly mends from the recession.

"Greenville is already do-

ing better than the state in the recovery and will continue apace," he said.

Mark Vitner, senior economist with Wells Fargo, said he sees hiring gradually improving over the next few years. "It's not going to get back to where we were several years ago" for three to four years.

The county's jobless rate of 8.7 percent in October was a good bit better than the national rate of 9.3 percent in November. South Carolina's unemployment rate was 10.7 percent in Oc-

tober, with November numbers not yet out.

Greenville's rate was 11 percent in October 2009 while the national average was 9.5 percent.

However, other parts of the state could reach pre-recession employment levels earlier than Greenville, Yandle said. Charleston and Charlotte/Rock Hill should be back to 2007 levels by 2012, Columbia and Florence by the second quarter of 2012 and Greenville by second quarter 2013. Anderson's recovery

# improves

is anticipated to take place in 2015.

Julie Godshall Brown, president of Godshall Staffing in Greenville, said the jobs picture is improving.

"We've been a pretty significant increase in our office this fall, especially since November," she told *The News*, adding that increased hiring is across all industry sectors.

The American Staffing Association Index of contract and temporary employment is up 18 percent from the level it was at a

year ago, which Brown said is important because a large percentage of temporary employment becomes permanent hires.

Colleen Murray, hired as a recruiter for Human Technologies Inc. professional division about six weeks ago, is one of those who gained from the increase in hiring. Previously, she was an assistant golf professional, teaching and buying for a golf shop, when she decided on a career change

A recent marriage means she needed a more regular work schedule, she said. When the HTI job came open, she was attracted to the company and liked that she would continue to be dealing with people, she said.

"It's going great," Murray said. "They keep me busy, busy, busy."

Yandle said that manufacturing "is driving the recovery for the nation. Within manufacturing, it is vehicles and components leading the way."

Part of that growth is a reaction to the automotive crisis that hit with the recession.

"When you look at the recovery of retail sales — and that's encouraging — the big component is auto," Yandle said, adding that low interest rates are a big

help as is pent-up demand for new vehicles.

Car manufacturers, including BMW, are seeing sales growth.

"That's an indication that the recovery, nascent as it is, is beginning to bubble up," said Sujit CanagaRetna, senior analyst with the State Council of Governments.

With manufacturing the engine that's pulling the economy and autos pulling manufacturing, "Greenville is in good shape," Yandle said.

"BMW did not swoon with the industry," he said. In fact, it went ahead with a \$750 million expansion to its plant and will have hired 1,600 contract workers over the last six months of 2010.

Moreover, the Upstate is rife with auto heavy hitters, such as Michelin North America, Bosch, Lucas and Sage.

Another surprising plus for Greenville, Yandle said, is tourism. While tourism statewide is down 2 percent, Greenville's tourism has expanded as the city has become a destination.

One more economic plus for Greenville is its large regional health-care component, he said.

John Knight, co-owner and vice president of HTI Staffing, also is upbeat.

"Next year we're optimistic that employers will continue to hire," he said. "There will be jobs out there. People will be hired."