

500 vie for 200 Ocean House jobs

■ "Passion," says the Ocean House's managing director. "We're really looking for that much more so than skills."

By EMILY DUPUIS
Sun Staff Writer

WESTERLY — About 500 job seekers put their hopes in the Ocean House Tuesday, to be among the 200 year-round and seasonal employees the hotel plans to hire before its mid-May opening.

Starting at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, individuals, some dressed in suits and ties and others in jeans, lined up at the Westerly Armory on Dixon Street, resumes and references in hand.

"There were people of every background and every interest there," said Michael London, spokesman for the Ocean House.

"There were people there who remember the old Ocean House and were eager to participate in its rejuvenation; there were also people who were simply looking for a job."

"We were hoping for a large number of people, but not having done this before it was very hard to guess what the turnout would be," he added.

See **JOBS**, page 5

The Bluff Avenue luxury resort, a \$140 million construction project, is looking to fill around 120 year-round positions and 80 seasonal jobs, according to Dinah Saglio, director of communications.

A second career fair is scheduled next Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. also at the armory.

Equal consideration will be given to applicants who attend this second session.

"You're not at a disadvan-

tage if you come next Tuesday," Saglio said. Resumes can also be e-mailed to recruiting@oceanhouseri.com.

Inside the armory, each attendee filled out an application, spoke with a member of the Ocean House's prescreening team and then met with a member of the management.

Daniel Hostettler, the hotel's executive vice president and managing director, said they are primarily looking for personality: clean-cut, charming, outgoing individuals "who really, really want to work at the Ocean House."

"Passion," he added. "We're really looking for that, much more so than skills."

Hostettler said they were "thrilled" with the turnout: "I wish we could hire them all."

Among the job seekers stood Darlene Ross, interested in a food services position.

The Westerly resident has been working part-time for her family's shop, Pete's Grocery, and is looking for full-time employment.

"I think it would help Westerly a lot," she said of the hotel's opening. "There's a lot of unemployed people. I think a lot of people are willing to take cuts in pay just to have the full-time work."

Shawne Causgrove, who recently moved from Block Island to Westerly, said she is currently out of work and would like to put her years of experience as a bartender and waitress on the island to use at the Ocean House.

"It's exciting because it's new," she said of the hotel.

Hopkinton residents

Sarah Lagrasse and Chelsea Ahsay were both in search of second jobs to help pay the bills.

William Agosto, a Westerly construction worker, was applying for a maintenance job at the hotel.

He said he's been looking for work "everywhere," to no avail.

Westerly resident Rose Allen said she has also been out of work for two months after losing her job at a local restaurant.

After 20 years in the restaurant industry, Allen said she's looking for "anything right now. I don't care if it's housekeeping or serving or whatever. I just need something."

And Deborah, a Cranston resident who asked for her last name not to be used, said she was recently bumped to part-time at a golf club office because of a decline in membership.

She said the Ocean House is a "great opportunity for anybody."

"It seems a little bit more secure," she said, adding she has been searching for a job for around six months and received little response.

Guest services positions range from floor valets who can earn \$28,000 a year plus room service and resort-shared gratuities, to bell valets who can earn \$9 an hour and destination services agents who can earn \$12 per hour plus incentives.

On the food and beverage side, jobs include pool and beach valets earning \$8 an hour plus gratuities, cocktail hosts earning \$6 an hour plus gratuities and bartenders earning \$7 per



hour plus gratuities. And culinary positions include an up to \$40,000 per year dinner sous chef, and cooks, pastry chefs and stewards, who can earn between \$9 and \$15.50 an hour plus resort-shared gratuities.

The luxury resort, now taking reservations, includes 49 guestrooms and 23 private condominiums priced between \$1.5 and \$6 million. The resort also features a private Club Room and bar, Seasons restaurant, Seaside Terrace Café, the 12,000-square-foot OH! Spa, a lap pool with ocean view, a fitness center, croquet court, private beach and over 10,000 square feet of event space for weddings or other functions.

Seasons and the OH! Spa will be open to the public. Bluff Ave. LLC, a community investment group, formed in 2004 to reconstruct the original Ocean House, a New England

landmark built just after the Civil War and torn down 136 years later.

edupuis@thewestelry-sun.com

People line up Tuesday outside the Westerly Armory to apply for jobs at the Ocean House. A second job fair will be held next Tuesday.



DANIEL HYLAND / The Sun