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## Unemployed fairgoers can get job help with their corn dogs

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Out of work? Head to the Iowa State Fair on Thursday for career assistance and take part in a town hall meeting addressing work force issues.

Thursday is Central Iowa Works Day at the fair. Activities will take place on the Grand Concourse near the main fairgrounds entrance at East 30th Street and East Grand Avenue. The town hall meeting will be held from 9 to 10 a.m. at Margaritaville on the north side of Grand Avenue.

Fairgoers can pick up business, career and education information, take a career assessment and register to win a desktop or laptop computer along the south side of Grand Avenue near the Depot from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Cassandra Halls, president of 2 the Top-Career Advancement Strategies, developed the idea to focus on the unemployed at the fair.

"This was an outgrowth of an idea I was working on with the National Guard to provide career assistance to those visiting the Guard's booth," Halls said. "This is about thinking bigger, and realizing there are huge number of lowans unemployed right now, and recognizing that for these families, the fair may be their only family vacation."

Fairgoers can ask questions and receive feedback from local and state leaders on work force issues during the Town Hall Meeting.

The meeting will feature:

- Elisabeth Buck, director of Iowa Workforce Development.
- Steve Chapman, chairman of ITA Group and chairman of the Central Iowa Works board.
- Shannon Cofield, president of United Way of Central Iowa.
- Rob Denson, president of Des Moines Area Community College.
- Martha Willits, president of Greater Des Moines Partnership.

Free career assessments will be available from 9 a.m. and 9 p.m.

The Kuder assessment for adults, valued at \$35, can be taken in 15 to 20 minutes, with immediate feedback. Free assessments are also available for preschool- through college-age students.

Twenty organizations will be offering career resources, including the sponsors of Central Iowa Works Day, 2 the Top-Career Advancement Strategies, the Greater Des Moines Partnership, the National Guard, United Way and DMAACC. Fairgoers can talk with representatives from lowans for Social and Economic Development, Iowa Workforce Development, among others.

"Our goal is to help families become financially stable, and a good job is important to lowans," said Jane Fogg, United Way's director of financial stability. "We do a lot to provide resources and referrals, and we will have information available to help those in need."

Throughout the day, 15 desktop computers and five laptops will be given away, each loaded with Microsoft software. The refurbished computers are being donated by the community college.

The fair will offer free admission between 5 and 7 a.m. Thursday with the donation of two canned goods or a \$2 donation to the Central Iowa Food Bank.

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