

One in a *Ver*Million

Meet Dan Hart

By Travis Gulbrandson
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When Dan Hart graduated from the University of South Dakota in 1991, he wanted to remain in the Vermillion area.

He said there were several potential areas of employment, but the one that appealed to him most was just that – employment.

For the past 19 years, he has worked at the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation's Vermillion office, for which he has been manager along with the North Sioux City office for the past three years.

"I handle wage complaints, questions from businesses, employers, labor law questions," he said. "Basically working with employers, helping people become employed – that's the majority of what our office does. We're considered workforce experts, basically."

Prior to accepting his management position, Hart worked as an employment representative and workforce training coordinator.

"It's never the same," he said of his work. "I'm not tied to the desk – I have to get out and visit with employers and meet with people, and so it's great in that respect. I just love it. ..."

"I'm a helping person, anyway, so to be able to help people is a dream job. I'm happy to come to work every day," he said.

When he's not at work, Hart enjoys motorcycling and fishing. He also is a self-

described "audiophile."

"I have a pretty extensive collection, eclectic tastes in music," he said. "I listen to everything from old country and western to modern jazz, blues, classic rock, all that stuff. I'm not so much into techno, and some of the modern country is out of my realm, but I listen to pretty much everything. ..."

"I like music that makes me feel good," he said.

His favorite group, the recently-split Asylum Street Spankers, was based out of Texas. Hart's enjoyment of their music led to his involvement in filming their 10th-anniversary show.

"I've got professional credits on their DVD, so that's my one claim to fame," he said.

Other interests include the Disabled American Veterans, for who he has served as local commander "for about four years," and the Vermillion Rotary Club.

Born in Anchorage, Alaska, Hart was raised primarily in the Canistota/Freeman area. He moved to Vermillion in 1984.

Hart has two step-children with his wife, Nicole Payer, who is a nurse. They have seven grandchildren.

He said he is glad to have made Vermillion his home.

"It's nice, it's quiet," he said. "I spent a couple summers while I was in college out in southern California. (There were) people everywhere. Even where you should be able to go and get away from people in the mountains, you can't."



DAN HART

Vermillion manufacturing job growth drives creation of welding boot camp

The recent addition of Builder's Choice to Vermillion's economy, and new expansion plans for Masaba Mining Equipment have pushed the demand for skilled trade workers to an all-time high. In order to meet this demand and remain competitive for future industrial economic development projects, the Vermillion Area Chamber and Development Company (VCDC) created a Welding Boot Camp to introduce basic welding skills to prospective workers seeking careers

in manufacturing.

"Our recent growth has not only highlighted the great opportunities in Vermillion and Clay County, but also our shortage of skilled trades people, said Steve Howe, executive director of the VCDC. "This is a trend in the region and to combat this shortfall, communities need to be proactive."

Representatives of the Vermillion School District, Masaba Mining Equipment, and the VCDC met to devise a rapid study curriculum to help meet immediate

need for welders by area employers.

"This course is intended to provide the basic knowledge of welding processes to make the employee more marketable to companies and reduce the necessary on-the-job training required by the employer," said Howe. "We're finding employers are willing to train, but the hurdle is finding workers who have the core skill set for them to build on, and we think this course will help provide that."

The 35 hour course will begin on Jan. 9,

2012 and focus on the MIG welding process and include education on shop safety, steel cutting methods, shop related math skills, and the various welds needed to be successful in the local workforce. While geared toward the recent high school graduate seeking the skills to enter the workforce or the adult worker considering a career change, those with a general interest in learning the basics of welding are also welcome to attend.

The strong demand for welders will allow

for immediate employment opportunities upon successful completion of the course, and the VDCD, through its workforce component of the Vermillion Now initiative, will offer tuition reimbursement for students obtaining employment with a Clay County company.

Howe explains, "These skills are needed, and Vermillion Now has provided us with the resources to help. As much as we want to recruit new companies to the area, it is as

important, if not more so, to help your current businesses stay healthy and grow."

To register for the class or to receive additional information, contact the Vermillion Area Chamber and Development at 605-624-5571 or vcdd@vermillionchamber.com.

For more information about business development opportunities in Vermillion, please visit VermillionEDC.com or call 605.624.5571.

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