

419 workers needed for new customer care center

By [John Dayberry](#) | Hickory Daily Record

A financial technology company will hold four meetings this week with prospective employees of its new customer care center.

Wisconsin-based Fiserv Inc. announced in October it would open the new center in February, creating more than 419 customer service jobs over the next three years.

The Fortune 500 company, the world's leading provider of online bill-paying and online banking services, will occupy all of the new Adecco facility in the McDonald Crossings Business Park at the intersection of Tate Boulevard and McDonald Parkway.

The new customer care center, which will provide technical support, customer management and data processing for the financial services industry, is expected to employ 300 people by late 2010. Jobs will pay an average annual wage of \$25,368, excluding benefits.

Fiserv officials will conduct information sessions on Wednesday and Thursday in the auditorium at Catawba Valley Community College on U.S. 70, SE.

Sessions will be held from 1 to 3 p.m. and from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. both days.

People planning to attend a session must pre-register by calling toll-free (866) 424-0097.

The sessions are designed to outline the functions of the customer care center and the responsibilities of the people who will work there, said Lance Beck, director, division operations.

While Fiserv representatives will be available to talk with prospective employees, they will not accept applications or conduct interviews, said Beck, who will be the top-ranking Fiserv employee at the Hickory facility.

Applications are only being taken online.

Applicants should go to www.monster.com and enter Fiserv Hickory in the search field.

Because the customer care center will be working with banks and other financial services companies, applicants must pass background checks, credit history reports and drug screenings in order to get a job, said Lori Stafford-Thomas, Fiserv's assistant vice president of corporate communications.

Applicants must have a high school diploma or, if 25 or older, a GED.

Beck said most customer care center employees will field telephone and online inquiries from consumers and financial institutions regarding online bill payment.

He said ideal employees will have:

• The ability to communicate clearly, both verbally and through the written word;

• Personal computer skills, including a general knowledge of Windows navigation;

• Typing skills;

â Problem-solving skills;

â A passion for customer service.

Fiserv will begin conducting face-to-face interviews in early December, and start its paid training program by February, Beck said.

The Fiserv jobs are much anticipated in Catawba County, where the September unemployment rate was 13.6 percent.

"Fiserv's announcement is certainly welcome news for our area," said Allan Mackie, manager of the N.C. Employment Security Commission office in Hickory.

"It brings new opportunity for many job seekers who will be fortunate enough to be hired."

The 60,000-square-foot building in which Fiserv will locate its customer care center was developed by Atlanta-based real estate company Adevco.

Covation LLC, an Atlanta-based start-up, announced last December that it would use the building as a customer support center for business telecommunications services, creating 913 technical support, billing and customer service jobs.

Covation was to open its customer support center last April. In July, Covation officials said the U.S. economic upheaval had derailed their plans.

Fiserv, a 25-year-old company, has 20,000 employees worldwide.

North Carolina is providing an \$800,000 grant from the One North Carolina Fund for the Fiserv project. Any local incentives will be based on job creation and investment performance standards and will be considered in public session, said officials with the Catawba County Economic Development Corp.