

Opportunity rings: Prospective workers flock to CVCC to learn more about high-tech company

By [Larry Clark](#) | Hickory Daily Record

They came looking for jobs, excited at the possibilities of working for a cutting-edge company and gaining economic stability.

Fiserv, a financial technology company, plans to train the first wave of an estimated 419 workers in February.

Wednesday, company representatives were at Catawba Valley Community College for the first of four information sessions with prospective employees.

Shirley Weathers and Sarah Connor are young and well-spoken. Their reaction to Fiserv's presentation was clear.

"It sounds great," Connor, of Lenoir, said. "It seems like a company anyone would want to work for."
"Wonderful," Weathers agreed. She's from Hickory. "It's an opportunity."

Both were laid off from their previous jobs. Weathers said she's been looking for work for more than a year.

She talked about the session with a smile. "It was a good presentation. I came looking for more information and to make sure I did everything right. I've already applied."

Connor hasn't gone through the online application process. Yet.

"I like the prospects," she said.

Fiserv will locate in McDonald Crossings Business Park.

It won't be a call center, but a service facility where clients' questions are answered and their problems solved.

Fiserv operates the digital structure necessary for online banking transactions, data processing, anti-fraud security and technical support for the financial industry.

A number of major banks are among its chief clients.

"We're here to do a job," Lance Beck, director of the Hickory operation, said to the audience. "We're here to serve clients.

"We want to be the best. I don't get up the morning to lose," he said.

The company is in the background since its customer care is on the corporate, not public, level.

But, "Most people who bank online use Fiserv whether they know it or not," Beck said.

A succession of Fiserv representatives explained the company's mission, benefits, bonus program and community involvement.

The crowd that packed the small auditorium at CVCC applauded each speaker.

It was a mix of youth and experience, almost evenly split between men and women. Most were hopeful they

would be on the Fiserv team.

Beck stressed teamwork repeatedly. "We're here to solve problems and we rely on each other to give our clients the right answers," he said.

"We are the catalyst for our clients' success."

A visitor who identified herself only as Beth took notes during the presentation. She lost her job in January.

She wants steady employment. "And the benefits are really nice," she said.

Jim Davis, a Claremont resident, isn't accustomed to not working. He was laid off recently and was in one of the lines of people asking for more details on the positions Fiserv will fill.

"I like people and I'm ready to work," he said. "I want to know more about applying."

Fiserv reps fielded questions about applications, and some prospects inquired about medical insurance.

"They want to know about what type of experience we are looking for," said Fiserv's Laura Garza, "and if their skills are transferable to jobs."

Apparently, there are plenty of people with the skills to work for Fiserv.

"We think Hickory is the perfect fit for us," Beck said. "The people here are friendly and they're well-trained."

He cited CVCC's influence on establishing the operations center.

"The people here are great," Beck said. "They have expertise to meet our needs. No matter what we ask, Crystal has an answer, a ready solution."

Crystal is Crystal Glenn, CVCC's executive director of Business and Industry Training.

"We have a lot of qualified people wanting to go back to work," she said. "Fiserv likes the attitude. These sessions give everyone the opportunity to talk to individuals so they know who Fiserv is, and Fiserv knows who they are."

There was one question that the Fiserv folks didn't get.

"The people who came here today asked about qualifications, they asked about hours, benefits and when the center would become operational. They wanted to know when they would find out if their application would lead to an interview," said Kim Mladenik, Fiserv Human Resources director.

"But there wasn't one question about pay."