

BENTON HARBOR

200 youth to have chance to work, make cash

By JULIE SWIDWA
H-PStaff Writer

BENTON HARBOR — About 200 young people from Benton Harbor will have a chance to keep busy, earn money and gain work experience in this year's summer youth employment program.

The Benton Harbor Youth Works! summer program will take applications next week from 2-7 p.m. Tuesday at the Bobo Brazil Community Center and Benton Harbor High School and 9 a.m.-3 p.m. June 14 at the high school.

Young people ages 14-21 can apply and should bring photo identification showing date of birth, Social Security number and proof of residency in the Benton Harbor Area Schools district. Minors should be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

The summer jobs program is administered by Michigan Works! Berrien-Cass-Van Buren counties and is funded by a \$300,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth.

Announcing the grant in a news release, Gov. Jennifer Granholm said, "This is a great way to give our children useful summer activity and work experience all at

the same time." She said the program is designed to provide new summer job opportunities for about 200 Benton Harbor young people. They will be placed into jobs by Michigan Works!

The jobs, funded by the state grant, pay the federal minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour for 32.5 hours per week for six weeks. The jobs will begin June 21.

This will be the fourth summer for Benton Harbor Youth Works!

Last summer, 527 young people applied for the 200 available jobs.

"The tremendous response to this program shows the desire and ambition of local youth who are already thinking about their futures," said Todd Gustafson, executive director of Michigan Works! Berrien-Cass-Van Buren.

"We are committed to preparing and strengthening Michigan's future work force," he said. Candice Elders, community relations manager for Michigan Works!, said at least 125 area employers have committed to hiring youths in the program for the summer.

They include media outlets, banks, community service organizations, health care facilities, apartment complexes, schools, marinas, stores, restaurants and manufacturing companies.

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