

Goodwill sees more activity

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Within the past few months, Goodwill Industries International has seen quite a flurry of activity.

There has been a hike in sales and drop in donations. According to Big Bend Goodwill's marketing director Brooke Lochore, February sales have increased significantly.

"February is usually our down month, however seventeen of our twenty five stores have made their quota. That's unusual," Lochore said.

"Goodwills are experiencing this all over the country." Although Goodwill sales have gone up, the rate of donations has dropped.

"Until people start buying retail again, we will continue to see fewer donations. Some people may hold off on buying that new couch [and] donating their old one to us," Lochore said.

Marvin Thompson, 25, a Goodwill shopper from Atlanta, said he enjoys looking for retro items at the consignment store.

"I find a lot of used books and vintage clothing here," Thompson said. "You can find a lot of great used furniture, especially when people are moving out."

Goodwill's local main facility, located at 300 Mabry st, has also seen a 25 percent increase in applications for their Job Placement Service program. The program assists and prepares local residents for employment. Lochore said the program recently posted an open position that attracted 300 applicants within a few hours.

Lochore said Goodwill is offering free prorams in computer training, resume building, and soft skills training- like how to dress, to beef up the resumes of applicants in-between jobs.

"It gives those who may be in job limbo something to prepare them for when an opportunity opens up," Lochore said.

Big Bend Goodwill is also working with Florida Ready To Work, a state program that offers free training skills to those seeking jobs. A certificate is presented to participants upon completion, the "Florida Ready to Work Credential," which is signed by Governor Crist.

"We help individuals gain experience in job training by offering skills and knowledge sought by employers," said Big Bend Goodwill's director of the Job Placement Program, Dee Austin.

Along with Florida Ready To Work, Goodwill connects suitable program participants and firms seeking employees who may offer a suitable position.

"We have seen many, many, successful results comes from these programs," Lochore said.

To receive more information about Goodwill's service programs call 850-576-7145. For information about Florida Ready To Work visit www.floridareadytowork.com