

## Slumping economy sending more seniors back to work

By SHELLY BIRKELO

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JANESVILLE — Arlene Perkins, Chuck Rote and Bob Lindemann are not alone.

They are among a growing number of workers 65 and older. All three returned to work primarily to pay for Medicare supplement insurance.

The slumping economy has prompted many seniors to seek employment to help pay for everyday living, too.

Since January, the number of workers 65 and older has increased nationwide by 434,000, according to Experience Works, a nonprofit organization that provides training and employment services for low-income older workers.

Rote, 68, was six years from being eligible for Medicare—a federal program that pays for certain health care expenses for people 65 and older—when the company he had worked at for 37 years closed.



Photo by [Bill Olmsted](#)

Bob Lindemann delivers parts for a Beloit auto dealer. Lindemann retired in 1995 and says the extra income allows he and his wife to have a few extras in their lives.

Rote received some severance pay, but he lost his health insurance. The buyer of the company where Rote and his wife had worked offered new health insurance, but it was too expensive, he said.

So Rote worked 2 1/2 years as a parts runner for an international trucking company before becoming a valet parking attendant at Dean Riverview Clinic in 2002.

Although Rote and his wife now both are on Medicare, his income helps pay for supplement insurance costs that he said has been increasing 15 to 20 percent every year.

"It's really been a blessing for me to find a job like this without the physical labor," Rote said, while working at the north entrance of the local medical facility.

Bob Lindemann, 75, Janesville, was a printer for more than four decades until he retired in 1995. He had health insurance coverage through his wife, who worked for an area school district. But when she retired, the couple found they couldn't afford health insurance.

So Lindemann went to work part-time in the late 1990s, delivering parts for Bud Weiser Chevrolet-Cadillac, Beloit.

His wages are enough now, he said, "so we can afford supplement insurance and do things we couldn't do before like a little traveling," he said.

Arlene Perkins, 71, also is a part-time valet parking attendant at Dean Riverview Clinic. The money she makes—her only income besides Social Security—helps pay for supplement health insurance, property taxes on the home she has owned for over 40 years, homeowners' and car insurance and every day living expenses.

"Sometimes it's pretty rough," she said.

She worked for more than 30 years at Cedar Crest Health Center. Her husband of 16 years died when he was 38, three months before he qualified for a pension at a Beloit Corp. She had to support four young children.

Perkins is grateful for her job and thankful she doesn't have a family to feed with the increasing cost of groceries.

"It's not a big-paying job, but without it, it would be very difficult to make ends meet. I'm not able to go out as much as I did the last couple years with the increasing cost of everything. I don't have the money to do it," she said.

Lindemann said that without part-time income he and his wife would be living strictly on their Social Security and her pension.

"It would be tough to afford, keep the supplement insurance, and we'd really have to watch our expenses," he said.

Rote said his part-time income gives him and his wife the opportunity to travel. They recently bought a new car.

Otherwise, he said, "we wouldn't be able to afford these things."

Perkins, Lindemann and Rote all enjoy what they do.

"The guys I work with are great, and the people I meet are friendly," Lindemann said.

"Dean is a good company to work for. My fellow workers are very nice to work with," Perkins said.

Rote gets satisfaction from working and helping others. He said it makes him feel like he's making a difference.

All three say they will continue to work, at least for a while.

Rote sees himself retiring in a few years, he said.

"I'm going to do it until I can't anymore," Lindemann said.

"I will as long as I can unless my health prevents me from working," Perkins said. "But I hope not because I think the cost of things will continue to go up."

### ELDER ADVICE

Tips for older job seekers:

Give it some punch—Start your resume with a tag line that emphasizes your desired outcome in your new position.



Photo by [Bill Olmsted](#)

As part of his job as a valet parking attendant at Dean Riverview, Chuck Rote also serves as an unofficial greeter of sorts when there are no other duties for him. After more than 35 years in a factory job, Rote enjoys his interactions with 'hundreds of people' a day.

## ENCLOSURE 10

Stick to the core—List your accomplishments and experience from your work history in terms of core competencies related to the position you seek, not based upon chronological order. The biggest error made by many older workers is to list all of their duties and responsibilities over the years, even those that have no relevance to the position sought.

Keep it brief—Your resume should be no longer than two pages. Arrange your accomplishments in bulleted action items, not paragraphs. References do not belong in a resume; employers will ask for those in their application or at the time of the interview.

Leave it out—As an older worker, you should de-emphasize dates and years in your resume by omitting dates of education, leaving out earliest jobs and inserting time frames only for relevant past work experience.

Accentuate the positives—Emphasize the positive attributes of your age and experience including your accumulated experience, strong work ethic, ability to make a contribution immediately, and your familiarity with relevant computer software and other technology.

Source: Experience Works, a nonprofit organization that provides training and employment services for low-income older workers