

Saturday, May 3, 2008

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Deadline extended for 'Brain Drain' scholarship

By **JIM DINO**
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The deadline to apply for a Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership scholarship has been extended.

Bob Skulsky, executive director, said applications will be taken until May 23 for the scholarship meant to stop "brain drain" by matching local college and trade school graduates with jobs.

There is \$6,000 in scholarship money awaiting three people from the Hazleton area — provided they promise to work in the Hazleton area for three years after graduation.

No one has stepped forward to apply for the assistance.

The partnership is again offering a two-year, \$6,000 scholarship, or \$3,000 a year, to students in courses of study

that will lead to degrees for jobs available in the Hazleton area.

Some of the two-year programs that meet a job need include industrial maintenance technician, manufacturing technology, electronics technology, computer technology and industrial technology.

Four-year programs are computer engineering, manufacturing engineering and production technology.

However, Skulsky said the partnership is preparing to amend the types of degrees that qualify for the scholarship to include health care professions. Jobs at the Tobyhanna Army Depot also have been eligible.

Skulsky believes one of the reasons for the lack of applicants is that young people going to a trade school, which is also scholarship-eligible, or

college are fearful they will not be able to find employment in the Hazleton area after graduation.

Candidates must live within the boundaries of the Hazleton Area School District or Weatherly Area School District, achieve a minimum 2.75 grade-point average and demonstrate employability.

But Skulsky said even if the student cannot meet the requirements of the grant, it "amounts to a loan, with a very low interest rate. The minimum payment is \$50 per month and the student has 10 years to pay it back."

For more information on the scholarship program, or to get an application, contact Skulsky at his office in Citruscape, 20 W. Broad St., Hazleton.

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