

Give employees a reason to stay

By MELISSA GUSS | Posted: Monday, March 14, 2016 10:12 am

When I first saw the title “Nobody wants to work” (The Daily News, March 10) it touched me in a way that can only be described as utter disbelief.

Nobody wants to work?

This article brings to the surface a very important subject that needs to be discussed. Laura Elder has opened this discussion in a way that should cause us all to pause for a moment to reflect on how this could be. How could there be a “shortage” of good workers?

The timing of this article is also very important. Galveston is a seasonal city, for the most part. Yes there are events throughout the year thanks to our good friends at the Galveston Convention and Visitors Bureau and Park Board, but the reality is we are a city of scattered dreams; a city that hires mostly for a season and then lets employees go without any concern for the effect. This is an attitude that has become too common in our great city.

The widespread use of the J1 Visa Program is a direct result of this disregard for local employees. The question should be, why does the government subsidize and allow massive tax credits to employers to hire employees from Russia, Ukraine, Japan, Romania and elsewhere?

Why not support a tax credit to hire U.S. citizens? Instead of making allowances with housing for these thousands of foreign workers, help foment a rebirth of hiring local? The article was correct when it said, “Gone are the days when a staffer was from the island or lived here awhile and could converse well with patrons and direct tourists to other places to visit in Galveston.” Yes it is true, most are gone. They have left the city that has forgotten them.

The truth is that it’s the proverbial cat chasing its tail. Local employers don’t want — or have to — give people a future; a real possibility to live and support their families. The solution is not to pass on the extra cost of hiring people year-round on to the consumer. No ... this is a falsehood that has been used for years to justify the greed and total abuse of the system for corporate gain. Don’t fool yourselves, they have the money. For the millionaires to share a few dollars and provide decent wages is too easy. Start a national campaign to “Come to Galveston and grow with us!” You see it really can happen.

Give people a real chance to participate and share the rewards of their hard work and they will come back. They will come back and make Galveston better than ever before. Isn’t that what we have always wanted? Instead of watching thousands of workers come and go every day. Give them a reason to stay. If we build it they will come.