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Economic Survival Guide: Make Money Merchandising

TROY - Jean Hacker headed into Price Chopper...but this time, it's not to spend money.

She's planned to make some.

"I'm going to be re-stocking the fixture," Hacker explained.

Her job? Re-stock the DVD's in a display, using a specific diagram. But Jean's not working for the grocery store, she's a 'merchandiser' for an outside company, hired by SONY Pictures Home Entertainment. For half an hour of work, she makes eight dollars.

"There have been times when I wanted the money because there's things I wanna buy, and I needed the extra money to do that," Hacker said.

Jobs like that are lined up by companies like [Market Force](#), with offices in Troy. It arranges for independent contractors like Jean to bid for as many jobs as they want. The work pays between eight and fifteen dollars an hour, sometimes...more.

"From my perspective it's somebody who signs up on-line, and says they're going to be somewhere at a certain place or time. And they do it," said Blake Herlick, President of the Merchandising Division for Market Force.

He said he wants people who are punctual, independent, and can pay attention to details.

"Particularly now, we've seen a great increase in the number of people applying for work with us so they can do this to augment their salaries. Because it's tough out there, and they need whatever money they can get," Herlick added.

"I probably make \$300, \$400 bucks a month," said merchandiser Neil Donovan.

Donovan has arrived at his fifth store of the day. At Big Lots on Hoosick Street in Troy, he re-stocked a phone card display.

"You try to take phones you don't have a lot of and fill in the spots so the display doesn't look empty," he said as he worked on it.

Neil is a retired federal auditor...turned merchandiser, who likes setting his own schedule.

"I just find when I got spare time, that's where I plug it in. So you know, when I'm not babysittin' my grandchildren, I'm workin' in one of these stores," Donovan said.

But the money you make as a merchandiser also costs you in other ways. You have to drive your own car, get your own insurance, and pay taxes on your earnings. If you make over 600-dollars in a year, you'll get a federal form to submit at tax time.

But you can 'write off' your mileage and office supplies. Merchandisers like Neil and Jean told News Channel 13, they're not getting rich, but every little bit helps.

"As far as the economy is concerned, it's been a good thing to have. It's been a help to bring in extra income," said Hacker.

Market Force's phone number is: 518-758-6403.

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