



# CAREER COACH

BY LORNA GAREY

**Dear Career Coach:**  
I'm moving from Ohio to Georgia this summer. I work for a small software company, have A+ certification and am training for the CCNA (Cisco Certified Network Associate) test. Most of the companies do not pay for relocation, and some even specify local candidates only. Any tips?

**SICK OF THE SNOW**

**DEAR SNOWBIRD:**

Most companies can find the talent they need locally, so unless they're seeking specific, hard-to-find skills, the local labor pool is usually deep enough. That's particularly true in large metro markets such as Atlanta, according to Katherine Spencer Lee, executive director of Robert Half Technology, a consultancy specializing in placing IT professionals.

Spencer Lee recommends that you focus your search on Georgia-based companies in the same industry as your current employer. While hiring managers can frequently find candidates with your combination of IT skills and certification, it might not be as easy to find someone with experience in your industry.

In addition, find out which skills are in demand in your new hometown (the Georgia Department of Labor, at [www.dol.state.ga.us/eshtml/eshtml01.htm](http://www.dol.state.ga.us/eshtml/eshtml01.htm), is a good place to start), and build your expertise in those areas. With your general networking



background, it might be a good time to focus on a specific area, such as network security or storage. Spencer Lee says that companies are investing more in those areas.

**I recently took a new position in software quality assurance testing that's very similar to my last job. However, I am now considered ineligible for overtime, which I previously received. What gives?**

**SALARY SLAVE**

**DEAR SLAVE:**

Your letter is very timely. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 not only sets minimum wage limits but also mandates overtime pay for all employees who do not clearly meet its narrow exemption criteria, with the onus on employers to demonstrate that an

employee is "white collar" and therefore exempt. However, employers complained that the law was outdated. On March 27, the Department of Labor proposed a number of changes, including many aimed at computer employees (see the proposed standards in detail at [www.dol.gov/esa/whd](http://www.dol.gov/esa/whd)).

These changes are likely to benefit previously exempt low-wage workers, such as those who manage retail outlets, but the news may not be as good for highly skilled IT employees without supervisory duties, who may have been considered nonexempt. Public comments will be accepted through June 30 at [whd-reg@fenix2.dol-esa.gov](mailto:whd-reg@fenix2.dol-esa.gov). **NWC**

Send your questions to [careercoach@nwc.com](mailto:careercoach@nwc.com)

ILLUSTRATION BY DANIEL GUIDERA

## GAME PLAN

Analysts agree the trend of moving jobs offshore is growing. Forty percent of large enterprises will use or consider offshore services by the end of 2004, according to Gartner. Worries about security and information privacy and concern for out-of-work U.S. employees have prompted some state legislators to consider laws curbing offshore outsourcing. Predictably, these bills have met heavy opposition from the Information Technology Association of America and other IT industry organizations. Ask your federal legislators to study this trend at the Washington Alliance of Technology Workers, at [www.unionvoice.org/campaign/offshoring](http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/offshoring).