Job fields explored at seminar

By MERRILY HELGESON
T-A Staff Writer

SAN MARCOS — School guidance and career counselors from throughout North County met at Palomar College Tuesday for an afternoon-long seminar on the labor market and job training.

John Disse, Palomar vocational counselor, organized the event to sample reaction to his idea of forming a North County Guidance Association. About 55 vocational specialists attended.

Guest speakers included Bob Graham and Susan Kuzanek of the state Department of Human Resources Development, Buzz Webb, director of career planning and financial aid at San Diego State University, and Earl Leach, director of the county Regional Occupation Program at Palomar.

Graham told the group that he expected to see the greatest future manpower shortages in paramedical and medical fields, machinists, retail sales, trained service workers, assembly-line workers, and construction and union trades.

He said the need for craftsmen and nurses still exists but is showing a decline as more and more young people are being steered into these fields.

Graham said manpower needs in North County break down to: Professional and technical, 14 per cent; administrative, 10; sales, 10; clerical, 16; craftsmen, 12; non-farm labor, 6; service (for instance, restaurants), 14; agriculture, 6; light manual, 8; transport equipment operators, 4.

He said he anticipates a further decline in need for agricultural workers and a corresponding rise in the need for retail sales workers. He predicted that "from what I’ve read, we’re not ever going into heavy industry in North County."

Graham advised counselors to give computer programming a lower priority in their career recommendations because "I can’t think of one demand I’ve come across lately for a computer programmer, but we’re graduating a lot of them."

This view was contradicted by one high school vocational counselor, who said he had been placing all computer programmers trained in his school with firms like NCR, Burroughs and Hewlett-Packard in Rancho Bernardo.

Webb said he’d experienced a rising desire on the part of young people to go into "jobs where they can help people" and to reject technological careers like engineering.

"Two years ago engineers were being laid off all over the country," Webb said. "Now engineering is the most demanded job area."

Meanwhile, possibilities for public service careers are dropping as greater numbers of trained workers are entering the field and as government spending in public service areas is cut back.

Webb said that the children born during the post-World War II baby boom now are entering the job market in great numbers and to provide jobs commensurate with their generally high level of education, "we’ll have to provide 40 per cent more jobs each year throughout the 1970’s."

He said he didn’t think it could be done and said "a lot of people are going to be underemployed if they’re employed at all."

Webb described a program he’d instituted at SDSU in which students who wanted to enter a particular field were being required to spend at least one full day with a person already doing that job. Many students who actually experience what their chosen vocation is like on a day to day basis (he gave the example of a girl who’d wanted to become a veterinarian) change their minds, he said.

Ms. Kuzanek, a specialist in aptitude testing, warned educators not to rely heavily on results of aptitude tests.

"We tested a group of aerospace engineers who wanted help in finding new vocations after their field closed down and found that some of the ones who’d been highest-paid and given the most responsible positions in their engineering field had no aptitude at all to be engineers," she said.

Aptitude testing not be done with all students, but only with those who really couldn’t decide what kind of career they wanted and needed help in learning where they could expect to succeed.

"If an individual knows what he wants to do and has a strong interest in it, let him follow that interest," she recommended.