

# Progressive hiring 300 for jobs in the Springs

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Progressive Insurance plans to add 300 employees to its Colorado Springs payroll by year's end to keep up with surging growth in its policy base.

Most of the hiring, 250 jobs, will be in the company's sales and customer service center at 12710 Voyager Parkway in the Northgate development. An additional 50 employees will be added to Progressive's new data center, which is planned to grow to 300 workers in three years.

Progressive is the nation's third-largest automobile insurance provider.

"We are hiring because of growth in our business. All of the lines of business that are served by our Colorado Springs center are growing at doubledigit rates," Leslie Kolleda, a spokeswoman at the company's Clevelandarea headquarters, said Friday.

Progressive reported in January that its premium revenue last year jumped 16.1 percent from the previous year to \$13.2 billion.

That's down from a 27.7 percent premium growth rate in 2003. Premium growth has slowed slightly in the first two months of 2005.

Progressive employs 50 at the data center, temporarily housed in the sales and customer service center. The company plans to start construction by July on a \$57 million center on its 54-acre Northgate campus and complete the building in 2006.

Jobs at the data center include software designers, programmers, analysts and others who manage and maintain the center. The jobs will be filled by local hires and workers transferred from the company's data centers in the Cleveland area, Kolleda said.

The company pays the 1,030 workers in the sales and customer service center an average of \$12 an hour plus annual bonuses of up to 12 percent. The benefit package for workers includes access to an on-site fitness center.