

Surviving the Boom



Who We Are

October 7, 2014

The Bakken worker has been stereotyped as a hard working, hard drinking, strip bar frequenting, young man with money to burn. It is not true but makes for good reading. I recently saw an article online profiling a young man who was making six figures at the age of 20 but one day bought 8k worth of guns and spent 5k on an evening of partying.

Some of that is true, but, according to a white paper written by Target Logistics, http://www.targetlogistics.net/1_pdfs/white-papers/BeyondtheRoughneckStereotypeWhitePaper.pdf, a man camp provider, the typical worker is a man in his mid 30's, with a wife and kids, working away from home trying to provide a better life for his family.

For the most part, these men with families, that I have met, are solid, bright, often former business owners, whose lives were turned upside down in this economy. They are here only because business is weak and jobs back home pay poorly. Many have incurred huge debts. Many went bankrupt. They are honest, hard-working men that would do anything rather than accept a dime from the government.

They are patriotic Americans, who are also pissed off about working this hard away from their homes, while being highly taxed, only to have those hard-earned dollars given to others who won't work.

There are over 25,000 unfilled jobs in North Dakota. For those that want to work, there are jobs. I admire every one of these family men. I know how difficult it is for them. Before you make a decision to come up here, look before you leap, being away from family is harder than you can imagine.

About half of the guys here are young and rudderless. They come to the Bakken to make big money but often leave quickly for locations elsewhere, at half the pay, but a much improved quality of life.

Many who stay are just sort of existing. If work is slow, which happens from time to time, they will often forego work to get together and party.

You can't really blame them. Outside of work, there is little to do. Any down time will cause you to think about your situation or miss your family. Getting together with others passes the time, and is worth it for some, even though it may cost them hundreds in lost wages.

A few of my younger co-workers have been able to stick to a plan, stashing their earnings to eventually give themselves greater opportunities in the real world. But, that is not the norm. One co-worker, a young man that had a plan, has saved nearly 100k in two years.

If you are a young man wanting to work here, hoping to save thousands, then first make an honest assessment of who you are. Have a plan and stick with it or you may get stuck here for years.

<http://survivingtheboom.com/2014/10/07/who-we-are/>