

Chemical giant DuPont announces 3,500 job cuts

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News of job cutting in the US manufacturing sector continued with **DuPont Co.**'s announcement Monday that it will eliminate 3,500 jobs, or about 6 percent of its global workforce, by the end of the year. The Wilmington, Delaware-based chemical giant said the cuts are in line with a \$900 million cost-reduction plan announced in late 2003.

The company will slash 3,000 positions, about two-thirds of them in the United States and Canada, and will eliminate another 500 through attrition. DuPont also plans to cut 450 contractor positions, most of them in the US. A company spokesman said all levels of the workforce will be affected, including management.

The plan includes the shutdown of the DuPont Canada Inc. spandex stretch fibers operations in Maitland, Ontario. The plant will be closed in May, costing 85 employees their jobs. Another 115 DuPont workers will lose their jobs across Canada.

Jim Rowe, head of Local 2-943 of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers representing 600 workers at a Dupont facility in Deepwater, New Jersey, said the new cuts threaten worker safety. "I think they went well past downsizing," he told the AP. "They're mismanaging this whole company."

Since a high in 2000, manufacturing employment in the US has dropped by about 3 million, and factory jobs have declined from 13.1 percent to 11 percent of the workforce. News of job-slashing and plant closures continues to ravage communities across North America.

Emerson Appliance Controls announced April 7 that it will close its plant in Sparta, Tennessee, by June 2005. The company will begin phasing out the 492 jobs at the plant in a few months. The Emerson plant makes small motors for electrical controls, and at one point employed between 1,200 and 1,300 workers in two

plants in Sparta.

The job cuts in Sparta—with a population of only about 4,600—will have a devastating impact. "It hurts. It's like a dagger in the heart," Sparta Chamber of Commerce President Wallace Austin told the AP.

In Canada, electronics manufacturer **Celestica Inc.** will close its Montreal-area plant and lay off about 700 people, a company spokesman said April 6. The Ontario-based company, a unit of the Onex Corp. conglomerate, employs a total of 3,000 people at its head office and manufacturing plant in Toronto. The shutdown will affect 400 regular employees, 40 contractors and 250 temporary workers. Few of these workers will be offered positions at other Celestica facilities.

The jobs of workers in the public sector continue to face the ax. Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick announced the layoff of 377 city workers in his budget address to City Council on Monday. The job cuts will be mainly targeted at workers in the maintenance division of the **Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT)**.

The city plans to save \$51 million by laying off 112 workers who repair, fuel and clean buses; eliminating 263 vacant positions through attrition; and transferring another 357 jobs from the city budget to the new Detroit Housing Commission.

Kilpatrick is seeking to balance the city's \$1.6 billion budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, which has a projected shortfall of \$263 million. The city will also need to borrow \$141 million, the mayor said.

City officials claim the cuts will not affect the 120,000 people who ride the city's buses each day. But passengers already face a woefully decrepit system, where buses frequently break down and they are forced to sometimes wait longer than an hour to be picked up.

Under the new plan, the work of dozens of DDOT workers who make \$12 an hour cleaning and fueling buses will be shifted to the remaining mechanics, who earn \$20 an hour, which they will have to perform in addition to their maintenance duties.

Disabled riders, who currently ride the buses for free along with seniors, will now have to pay 75 cents a trip. This is a cruel twist, in a city which has routinely granted huge tax breaks to corporations in an attempt to lure business into the city.

The Detroit city job cuts come in the wake of an April 1 announcement that the Detroit public school system is eliminating 3,200 jobs, including 900 teachers and 2,300 non-teaching jobs, including central office employees, administrators and support staff. Seven hundred workers will be laid off and the rest of the positions will be eliminated through attrition.



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