

Over 150 workers to be laid off by trailer manufacturer Great Dane in central Pennsylvania

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Trailer manufacturer Great Dane announced earlier this month that 155 workers would be laid off at its Danville, Pennsylvania factory early next January. The company blandly asserted that it has done “everything within [its] power” to retain its employees and “keep operations running smoothly,” but the layoffs were “necessary” due to a “prolonged freight recession and the need to adjust ... manufacturing capacity to align with current market demands.”

The company has declared these layoffs a “temporary setback” and has confidently reaffirmed its commitment to its own corporate growth. It will be “offering resume and interview training, as well as other employment resources” to those impacted by the layoffs. Finally, it said that it “hopes” to recall all of the employees laid off at a future date.

The Danville plant is one of Montour County’s largest employers, and the single largest manufacturing employer in the county. Occurring right before the holidays, the layoffs will have catastrophic economic repercussions for the area, which has been rocked by deindustrialization over decades.

“It’s funny because not even six months ago [Great Dane] gave us a whole speech about job security and there’s nothing we should worry about,” said one worker at the Danville plant in response to the announcement. Another worker commented that the trailer manufacturer was “doing the layoff all wrong” and “laying off people that’s got 5, 10, 20, 30 years in but people’s got six months they’re keeping them.”

Workers at nearby plants offered condolences to those impacted, while family members expressed concern on social media. “There goes my Christmas present,” stated one family member in response to a social media post.

Headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, Great Dane is one of

the largest manufacturers of truck trailers in the world, employing approximately 5,000 people worldwide, and generating approximately \$1.6 billion in revenue. In the United States, the company has manufacturing plants in Tennessee, Georgia, Arkansas, Indiana, Illinois, Nebraska and Wisconsin. In Pennsylvania, Great Dane purchased its Danville factory in 2002, which was formerly a Strick’s Eastern Van factory.

The company also operates a second factory in Pennsylvania, located in nearby Elysburg where workers on social media have also expressed nervousness about a lack of work.

Montour County is a largely rural area southwest of Pennsylvania’s Wyoming Valley region, where the cities of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre are located. Montour County has a per capita income of \$43,700 and a 9.6 percent poverty rate. The living wage for one adult with three children is \$59.30 an hour.

Montour County Commissioner Rebecca Dressler, echoing Great Dane’s fraudulent pledges of assistance, offered “concern and empathy” to these workers and their families. Dressler has stated the board’s commitment to “fostering an environment that promotes job growth and will continue to explore all avenues to bolster economic opportunities in [the] county.”

The local official said that Montour County’s “priority is to ensure that these workers have the resources and support they need in the meantime, and that our community remains strong through this temporary setback.” These are empty platitudes. Whatever is being offered will be inadequate in comparison to the loss of livelihood the corporation’s workers now face.

The corporate politicians of both the Republican and Democratic parties have refused to issue statements concerning the layoffs. This includes Republicans such as

Lynda Schlegel Culver in the Pennsylvania 27th Senate District, which includes the county, and Mike Stender in the Pennsylvania 108th Representative District. At the federal level, this includes Republican Dan Meuser in the Pennsylvania 9th Congressional District and Democratic Senators John Fetterman and Bob Casey, Jr.

The Danville layoffs follow a pattern occurring globally, with millions of layoffs driven by corporate cost-cutting over the past two years. The Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry has seen a drastic increase in WARN notices, which are required to be filed when an employer with 100 or more employees plans to close a plant or engage in layoffs. As of mid-November, there had been 74 WARN notices filed in Pennsylvania in 2024. For context, there were 69 WARN notices filed throughout all of 2023.

Other large layoffs announced in Pennsylvania recently include a Boeing facility in Smithfield, affecting 101 workers; a BVPV Styrenics plant in Monaca, affecting 140 workers (the plant is set to close completely in early 2026); and a Bowery Farming facility in Bethlehem, affecting 104 workers. In October, 420 workers at CabinetWorks near Harrisburg were given layoff notices which are set to take effect in December.

The coordinated layoffs at non-union and unionized facilities alike demonstrates the unions' collaboration with the corporations in boosting their bottom lines at the expense of workers.

The freight, trucking, and logistics industry has experienced a loss of thousands of jobs. This week, several companies announced 1,277 jobs will be lost and six distribution factories will be closing their doors. A slew of major corporations, including PepsiCo, CJ Logistics America, Reyes Coca-Cola Bottling LLC, Amazon and Trademango Solutions announced the elimination of 2,400 jobs in recent days.



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