

WATCO SENDS JOBS TO KANSAS



The Governor of the state of Wisconsin, Scott Walker, along with a number of other state officials, have been working hard and putting a great deal of focus on different ways to bring jobs to the area and help to lower unemployment rates so that people in the area could find the employment that they have been seeking for quite a while now. However, Watco Transportation Services is doing the exact opposite, sending jobs out of state, particularly to the state of Kansas. There are around 250 individuals who currently work for the Wisconsin & Southern but several of these people, over two dozen, should expect to see that their positions will be transferred on over to the headquarters for the Watco Company, which is located in Pittsburg, Kansas. These new changes that have occurred since Wisconsin & Southern had been sold have left many workers unhappy and out looking for new employment. A number of managers have already departed from their positions. Frank Huntington, from the Bureau of Rails and Harbors, even said, "A few managers have left, but I think that was of their own accord -- I'm not sure." Some of the jobs that are currently at risk for being transferred over to Kansas include a number of manager positions and administrative positions. However, some other positions, including dispatch services and customer service, may also end up being transferred. The payroll functions have been sent to the Kansas area at this point in time. Huntington also said that the transportation officials did not know that Watco was sending a number of positions to a different state. He also said that it is fairly normal for a company of this size to do such a thing, especially since Watco currently has 20 rail lines and several other businesses. Huntington said, "Anytime you have one company being bought out by another you would expect some of that. We didn't ask a lot of questions along those lines because it was a private company basically buying a private company." There is one position that has already been vacated and that is the position of the Wisconsin & Southern President. It is believed that Bill Gardner, the former president for the Wisconsin & Southern, was pushed out from his position after he started to complain about the way in which the railroad is operated by Watco. Gardner was advised to fire a company manager but he chose not to do that and that is one of the many reasons he may have been pushed out from the position. Back in January, Watco ended up buying a large percentage of the railroad from Gardner, as he chose to keep a mere 10 percent ownership for the company. He officially sold his last remaining percentage last month.