

## ABOUT 117 WORKERS TO BE AXED AS SPECTRAWATT CLOSES PLANT IN DUTCHESS COUNTY, NY



Over 117 workers are now facing an impending layoff as SpectraWatt Inc., a US based manufacturer and distributor of high performance silicon solar cells for use in solar modules, announced a plan to close its solar cell plant in Dutchess County, New York. The closure is attributed to the recent declining demand for solar cells. The New York Department of Labor confirmed the news and said that the solar firm has submitted its closure notice indicating that about 117 plant workers would be affected. The notice also stated that the job cuts will start on March 20, 2011. According to the news released by the SpectraWatt, the company blamed the present market conditions for the immediate closure of the plant. In the past years, the solar firm was one of the few large manufacturing employers to flourish in Dutchess County. "This action is undertaken in response to deteriorating market conditions resulting from a harsher-than-usual European winter causing a large drop-off in demand for solar cells. The company continues to pursue alternatives aimed at improving its current situation and hopes to reverse this action." The President of Dutchess County Economic Development Corp., John MacEnroe, was saddened by the recent news but he said that he understood the solar firm's decision. "The reasons are purely economic. All of Europe is under fairly severe economic duress. I think solar energy has become too expensive in Europe at the moment." MacEnroe added that another possible reason for the plant's closure can be attributed to the reduction of subsidies in different European countries since the solar power industry also depends to some extent on government assistance.

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