

NEARLY 40 WORKERS FACE TEMPORARY LAYOFFS AT HERCULES CEMENT



Around 40 employees are slated for temporary layoffs beginning in January 2011 at the Hercules Cement Company Inc., a manufacturer of building construction cement in Stokertown, PA due to the decline in product demand. The temporary layoffs are set to impact nearly half of the unionized work force of the plant, which currently has about 125 workers in total.

The plant manager for the Stockertown cement producer, Richard Zimmel, said that the company is planning to eliminate around 35 to 37 plant workers from the 80 workers under the Teamsters Local 773 come January 3, 2011. However, Zimmel noted that the upcoming layoffs are just a short-term plan though he is still clueless as to when the affected workers will be recalled. "It depends upon on how business is in the first months of the year. Workers were told to expect the layoffs to extend through January."

Zimmel attributed the layoffs to the declining demand of cement products over the last two years. The industry had its peak in 2006 and remained flat years after. "All the forecasts say that next year is going to be flat also. The Stockertown plant is now about 35% below its production capacity."