

MASTERBRAND TO LAY OFF 150 WORKERS



American craftsmen and factory workers have taken a lot of hits in the past few years and while every lay off is hard, they seem to keep on coming. This time the layoffs are courtesy of MasterBrand Cabinets. MasterBrand Cabinets is a company best known for the creation of home furnishings and cabinetry. It is expecting to lay off 150 of the employees who work at the Kinston, North Carolina plant. These layoffs are related to the company's realignment strategy. The realignment strategy was needed to switch out an older product line in favor of a new one. The new line, "Kitchen Classics" cupboards, will be created for the Martha Stewart while moving the production of its Aristokraft cabinets to the company's home state of Indiana. Since the "Kitchen Classics" come pre-finished the workers are no longer needed to complete this task. Workers who remain on with MasterBrand will move to the new 600,000 square-foot facility currently being built off Collier Loftin Road in the same town. The move will force 156 full time and agency employees to be let go. The actual cuts will take place some time in early October, though no specific dates have been released at this time. The company had little to say to its employees when letting them go. "Making these adjustments allows for better use of available capacity within our facilities. Unfortunately, it reduces the workforce needed in the Kinston facility for the immediate future," Rob Mullally, the executive vice president of operations, stated during the layoff announcement. "We remain focused on outperforming a challenging market and we intend to maintain the capability to ramp up capacity in Kinston as market demands increases." This announcement is in direct competition with the 330 workers that MasterBrand hired last spring to assemble the Martha Stewart line. The average worker was paid \$25,000 for this work. This cut of 150 removes almost one half of the employees brought on last spring. At its height, this MasterBrand plant had roughly 900 employees on staff, and they were making roughly 5,000 cabinets each working day. Currently, the plant makes about 2,000 cabinets a day and makes do with only 367 employees. While a representative of the company assured the town that they were committed to continuing production at the Kinston plant in the long term, they did not provide any details about future plans for the facility and its staff. When asked directly if the company plans to bring the 150 laid off employees back on, the representative declined to comment on the matter. So, if there is hope for the 150 laid off workers at the Kinston, North Carolina plant, it will most likely not be coming in the near future. The local unemployment offices are ready to help the displaced workers file claims and receive their unemployment benefits. The office is encouraging the workers who are laid off to file their claims as soon as they possibly can in order to receive their benefits in a timely manner.

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