

ALCOA HOWMET LAYS OFF 18



The odds are that the average person is not familiar with the name Alcoa Howmet. The company is not exactly a household name. Alcoa Howmet describes itself as, "a world leader in the investment casting of super alloys, aluminum and titanium primarily for jet aircraft engines and airframes as well as industrial gas turbine (IGT) engine components. Alcoa Howmet also provides hot isostatic pressing, precision machining and protective coating services," on its website. The company has let go of 18 of the workers at its Hampton manufacturing plant this week. The company cited a "soft market" in industrial gas turbines as the reason for the layoffs. You can go ahead and insert your own soft market joke here if you would like, this reporter had so many options come to mind that choosing only one was impossible. According to a statement made by said Cary Dell, an Ohio-based spokesman for Alcoa Power Propulsion (the division of Alcoa Howmet that runs the plant and Hampton which is responsible for the industrial gas turbines production), most of the workers who were let go were salary workers. "We're still facing global economic headwinds in the business and our business is global in nature," Dell said to a reporter. While Alcoa Howmet may not be a household name it is one of the largest private employers in the Hampton area. The company currently employs about 720 workers in the area. While this means that the loss of 18 workers is not exactly a devastating one on the whole it is still not an encouraging sign for the remaining workers at the plant. That being said, if the company were to leave the area or simply shut down the impact on the city's budget could be large. According to figures that were released last year by the city the Alcoa Howmet plant accounts for more than half of the machinery and tools taxes that the city of Hampton collects. The Hampton plant is used primarily to produce the blades that turn inside of the turbines. This is not the first time that the plant has let go of staff. Since the facility was expanded on in 2009 the plant has let go more than 300 of its workers. That expansion effort cost the company a total of \$25 million. The company did have the chance to make some money off of the city of Hampton, but failed to take full advantage of the opportunity. The company was offered monetary incentives by the city and state if they met certain benchmarks. One of these benchmarks required the plant to create a minimum of 25 new jobs by September of this year. Since the company failed to create jobs, and instead shed them they will not get the incentive. Despite the soft market and the layoffs the company did not give any indication that they were going to move the plant out of the city in the near future. They seem to be confident in the placement of their facility and Mr. Dell gave a positive view of the company's future, "Our business strategy is on the right path to capture business when the market fully recovers."

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