

TORONTO MAYOR DEFENDS LAYOFFS



You may recall yesterday's coverage on the cutbacks to jobs that are going to be made in the city of Toronto. For those of you who did not catch the piece, or simply do not feel like re-reading it, here is an excerpt with the short version. "Bad news is coming to the city of Toronto, and it is coming in the form of job losses. The administration of Mayor Rob Ford is getting ready to hand out some pink slips to about 1,200 of the employees under his administrative control, right in time for the holidays. Officials representing the city made an announcement on Wednesday that exactly 1,190 people will be out of a job if the city council makes the decision to go ahead with a budget plan that will cut out the 2,338 jobs identified for elimination in the 2012 city budget." Well today the mayor of Toronto is stepping up to defend his decisions and try to explain to the people of his city why it is that the cuts need to be made. He is writing off these layoffs as the long overdue effect of the city's amalgamation, claiming that the jobs should have been lost at that point, instead of now. While that does make one wonder if he is making the implication that these people should be grateful to have their jobs as long as they did, he never stated that directly. What he did tell Canadian reporters was the following: "Obviously, it's going to save taxpayers millions of dollars. In the private sector, when you merge two or three companies together, you don't need three receptionists, you need one. You don't need two or three bookkeepers, you need one," the mayor told reporters. "When you merged seven municipalities together 13 years ago, the number of employees should not have gone up. If anything, it should have gone down. And that's what we're trying to do now; we're trying to streamline and be more efficient. And that's what the taxpayers elected me to do, run a leaner government." The specifics on who will be cut are a little bit fuzzy. We do know that of the jobs to be cut 666 of those positions are union workers. 152 of the workers will come from the Toronto Public Library employees, and 324 of the employees will come from the public transit systems. Other areas to take a cut may include the police. Richard Majkot, the executive director of the organization that represents the city's non-union staff, told a Toronto reporter that the layoffs have already begun, and seven of the member of his staff have been let go. He then went on to tell the same reporter that "The sequencing is all screwed up. They have not finalized what services will be funded and which will be cut. How can a division say it needs an individual or not?" The effect of the cuts on the city services has yet to be seen. Though if the talks with the union workers break down the residents of Toronto may be face to deal with prolonged service stoppages.

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