

HARLEY-DAVIDSON TO LAYOFF 250



Harley-Davidson Inc. may have once used, "The Road Starts here. It never Ends" as a slogan but apparently the ride will be over for some of the companies employees as the company is getting ready to layoff a portion of its workforce in order to stay fiscally sound. The company has begun the process of sending out layoff notices to their hourly employees in the state of Wisconsin. The company is looking to cut down on the number of workers that they have in the Milwaukee-area by about 26 percent. The company is hoping to use the space made by the job losses to allow for the introduction of seasonal workers. This is not the first time that the workers at Harley are hearing about these layoffs. The company first made an announcement about these layoffs in September of 2010. These layoffs are part of a seven-year plan that the company has begun to layoff a total of about 250 workers. The agreement is between the company and the 950 union workers that the company employs. In addition to the layoffs the company has agreed to hire on between 150 and 250 temporary employees who will be hired on as seasonal workers during the production spikes. So while there is a good chance that the overall number of jobs will stay about the same, the jobs just will not be the kind of full time and year-round jobs that make having a steady income and paying bills possible. So it is a mixed loss at best. While some of the displaced workers will be let go right away a number of the workers will also be given plenty of notice, as some of the notices will be given now for jobs that will actually be cut out in the month of April. The motorcycle company, which is based in Milwaukee, has been going through some major retooling in the recent past. These changes are mostly the brainchild of the new chief executive officer, Mr. Keith Wandell, who took over the company roughly two years ago in 2009. This retooling is designed to not only help the company to run leaner, but to be more profitable in general. The factory will have the flexibility to get rid of workers when they need to, and to amp up productions in order to meet consumer demands. In addition the company is looking to appeal to a wider area of the public, instead of only to the hardcore motorcycle enthusiasts that the company traditionally attracts with its products. The company is also looking to move into more emerging markets in order to expand its customer base and become more diversified as an organization. These job losses and changes to the contract with the United Steelworkers and International Association of Machinists and Aerospace workers, the union in question, are estimated to represent a savings of about \$50 million each year, after the 2012 fiscal year is over. In the company on the whole Harley-Davidson has made plans to layoff between 2,700 to 2,900 hourly production positions.

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