

HARLEY HOPES FOR VOLUNTARY LAYOFFS



We talked, a little earlier in the month about the decision of the famous motorcycle brand, Harley Davidson's, decision to let go of a fair percentage of its full time staff and instead replace them with seasonal help. For those of you who missed the coverage here is an excerpt from our [earlier coverage](#): "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....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." Now that you know what is happening we can talk about Harley Davidson's newest idea in the layoff train, voluntary layoffs. The company has decided to offer a voluntary layoff program to workers in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin area in order to make their plan of reducing the staff at production facilities by more than one quarter a reality. The deadline for choosing to lose your own job is December 23rd, right before factory workers go home for the holidays. Right now the right minded among you may be wondering why anyone would volunteer to be out of a job in the current economy? As you can imagine these types of programs have a very limited appeal. Workers who are looking to retire in the next year, or who believe that they will be let go anyway may take the deal if the financial incentives are strong enough, though at this time we have no details about the severance were given to the media at this time. Similar programs run by [Lockheed Martin](#) and the government of the [City of Toronto](#) have been far less successful than the organizations had hoped as workers are choosing to work later into their lives and the uncertainty of finding a job before the multiple unemployment insurance extensions run out has become a very real fear. These layoffs are part of the company's overall strategy for becoming more profitable. They also hope to expand their niche in the motorcycle world and move into emerging markets. One area that the company may be overlooking is price point, or as one motorcycle enthusiast said in a comment put on an article by the [Chicago Tribune](#), "It's no wonder their dropping in sales, anything with A Harley name on it is at least 10 or 20% higher in cost, (I saved \$110 on A back tire mounted by going somewhere else and getting the same exact tire as Harley offered.), and as A Harley owner I am getting tired of buying parts from HD that came from another country. As far as the workers welcome to reality, when sales are down, the work force goes down."

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