

CENTURY ALUMINUM WARNS OF SHUTTING DOWN HAWESVILLE SMELTER IN AUGUST



On Tuesday, Century Aluminum of Kentucky, a subsidiary of the Century Aluminum Company gave notice to its employees that it plans to shut down the Hawesville smelter, Kentucky, in August. Currently the Hawesville smelter provides **jobs** to about 750 workers directly at the plant and produces about 244,000 tonnes of primary aluminium every year.

The announcement was made to comply with provisions of the WARN Act or the federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act. The notice was for unionized **workers** belonging to the United Steelworkers of America labor union.

The notice observed that the plant would have to be shut down unless the company was able to procure electric power at viable rates. The date set for closing the plant has been given as August 20.

Century has also given a conditional notice to the Southwire Company of its plans to terminate its supply contract. Southwire is the biggest customer of Hawesville smelter products.

Also, in August last year, Century had already notified its electric supplier that it plans to stop production, unless it can procure electricity at cheaper rates. The plant receives its electric supply currently from Big River Electric Corp, a member-owned energy co-operative.

Century has a contract with Big River, until 2015, with the condition that the contract will cease, only if Century shuts down its Hawesville plant. Now, that day seems close by.

However, Century indicated that negotiations are on with Big River to renegotiate the energy prices. Michael Bless, the CEO of Century announced in a press release, "We remain resolved to finding a solution that will support the plant's continuing operations, and are discussing with the power provider an arrangement that we firmly believe will have no impact on any other ratepayer in the state."

Century also attempted this year to get a bill passed at the Kentucky state legislature, so that it could access the wholesale market for its power needs. However, the bill did not make it through and died on the floor.