

## HUNTERDON COUNTY LAYOFFS PROTESTED



When layoffs come to your job the odds are that you have a lot of negative feelings. You are, no doubt, worried about your future and where your next paycheck will come from. You are puzzled about why it was you who was deemed to be so expendable that you are the one leaving with the humiliating box of personal items. The odds are good that you are also angry that you, through no fault of your own, are now back on the market in search of work in a bad market. Don't you wish that you could do something about it? Well, it looks like the workers of are going to do something about it. Apparently they have, as an act of protest over their ever-dwindling numbers, decided to take it to the streets. At a recently Freeholders meeting the union that represents the county workers did just that. The protest, which was relatively small, with only about 50 workers showing up for the meeting, was designed to put pressure on the county freeholders about their budget decisions. The union hopes that through this protest the freeholders will find a way to re-work their budget to make cuts in other places besides staffing in order to keep workers in their jobs while still brining balance to the 2012 budget. The workers, who were led by union leader Adam Liebttag, wore red shirts with the slogan, Hunterdon Worker Hunterdon Voter." The protest is over the budget deficit of about \$1.2 million that that county freeholders have decided to correct with a staff reduction of about 24 workers. These are not the first job cuts to come to the workers of Hunterdon County, as a matter of fact the county has had some serious cuts in the past couple of years. IT has been estimated that from the beginning of the economic crisis in 2008 to the mid-point of 2011 the county shed a minimum of 99 jobs. While that may not seem like much in the age of mass layoffs when you consider that Hunterdon County boasts the second-smallest county work force in the state of New Jersey these cuts actually represent a significant portion of the workforce. Overall those cuts have saved about \$4.1 million in costs for the county. Or, as Adam Liebttag told the Freeholders, "You're pretty damn efficient," he said about the job cuts, "These folks are very damn efficient. You shouldn't cut them anymore." Who knows, maybe the protest will be an effective means of keeping people from losing their jobs. It would not be the first time that layoffs of government worker have been overturned. Some of you may recall our [recent coverage](#) of the overturned layoffs in Milwaukee County, but for those of you who did not catch it, here is an excerpt: "Well, it looks like that court action has saved some jobs for the workers who were going to be out of a job. The layoff of three of the captains, who were put out of a job under the watch of Milwaukee County Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr., was overturned on Thursday by the county Civil Service Commission, who decided that the layoffs were, in fact, a violation of the county rules. Sheriff Clarke made the argument that the three officers were let go because their jobs have been cut from the 2012 budget for the department. The commission sided with the three officers, Kerri McKenzie, Darlene Goodlette and Michael Rewolinski, that there was no reason given for the cuts that was in compliance with the county rules. According to the rules for non-union workers in Milwaukee County cutting jobs must be justified by issues with their job performance, a lack of the correct skills, problems with the employees attendance or budget matters. The positions being eliminated were simply not enough of a reason to put them out of their jobs."

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