

PHILLY PAPERS LAYOFF AGAIN



The group that owns the Philadelphia Inquirer, Daily News and Philly.com are getting ready to layoff 19 journalists. While 21 workers did take a voluntary layoff deal, with terms that have not been released, but cuts will still come for those who have not chosen to be out of a job. Of course, this is not the first time that cuts have come to this particular news organization. For those of you who missed out on our [earlier coverage](#) here is an excerpt: "It looks like more bad news is coming to workers in the field of journalism as more workers are being put out of a job in the name of the bottom line. In this case the company that is getting rid of workers is the Philadelphia Media Network. The executive met with leaders for the workers Guild in order to talk about cuts to the newsrooms at the Inquirer, the Daily News and Philly.com. Overall these newsrooms will cut about 37 jobs. Of course, the company is not looking to layoff if they can avoid it, they are hoping to buy out older workers into early retirement. The cuts are happening not because of closures, but because the news rooms of the three publications will be merging in order to use all of their resources more effectively." For those of you who are curious here is the full text of the layoff message from the union, for those of you who want to see it for yourself, originally [reprinted by Poynter](#): *Dear Guild member, This morning the Guild received notice from Philadelphia Media Network that it plans to lay off 19 members on March 31. Those targeted for layoff are: Two full-time Inquirer reporters, three part-time Inquirer reporters, four part-time Inquirer copy editors, one part-time Inquirer artist, one full-time Daily News reporter, one part-time Daily News reporter, three part-time Daily News copy editors, one part-time Daily News desk assistant, one Daily News part-time editorial clerk, and two part-time Philly.com multi-media content producers. These layoffs come after 21 members applied for and were approved for voluntary separation. While many of the volunteers wanted to leave, others made the difficult decision to apply because they knew how vulnerable they would be in a layoff. As per Article 28.1 of the Guild contract, layoffs are only to be made in the event of "good and reasonable cause," and the Guild and company are to discuss the need for the layoffs. Over the next 15 days we will engage the company about why the layoffs are unnecessary. If they are still implemented we will challenge the layoffs through the contract's grievance and arbitration procedure. It is our position that between the significant savings of the salaries of the members who volunteered to leave, and the concessionary contract in 2010 that gave the new owners \$6 million in cost cuts from our union, that enough is enough. According to a recent Inquirer story, Philadelphia Media Network made a \$4 million profit last year. For the Inquirer, Daily News and Philly.com to remain a viable operation in the 24/7 digital media landscape we believe that more employees, not less are required. Unfortunately CEO Greg Osberg, in efforts to make the books look more attractive to whatever investment group he has wrangled to buy the company, so long as they keep him on, believes that the region can be served with less journalists. Perhaps instead of killing stories he didn't like about the sale of the company and trying to be seen as some sort of digital visionary by holding press conferences at the Academy of Natural Sciences, giving free rent to start-up companies who play ping pong on the 5th floor at 400 N. Broad, creating a poorly-launched tablet and worrying about apps that make a few dollars, Osberg should be focused on properly staffing the newspapers in a manner that will allow more copies to be sold. The duplication of stories in both papers and the ongoing push to dump more and more content onto Philly.com will not solve any revenue problems. Whether Osberg wants to admit it or not, the print editions of the Inquirer and Daily News, which he offensively labels "legacy products," are responsible for generating more than 90 percent of the revenue. Osberg speaks of something called "Project Liberty," though nobody seems clear on exactly what that is. We believe our journalists should be given the liberty to continue working to serve the community that depends on us. In solidarity, Dan Gross, President, Bill Ross, Executive Director, and the Executive Board of the Newspaper Guild/Communications Workers of America Local 38010*

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