

IOGEN CORPORATION CUTS 150 JOBS



The odds are good that you have not heard anything about Iogen Corporation, unless that is you live in the Ottawa area and you know a lot about biofuel. For those of you who are not familiar with the company here is a look at how Iogen Corporation describes itself, "Iogen is a world leading biotechnology firm specializing in cellulosic ethanol - a fully renewable, advanced biofuel that can be used in today's cars. Iogen also develops, manufactures and markets enzymes used to modify and improve the processing of natural fibers within the textile, animal feed, and pulp and paper industries." For those of you need a translation on what exactly that means that they take biological matter and make fuel. They also make fabrics from natural fibers. The unique thing about this company is that they make bio-diesel without using food crops. Since the majority of the bio-diesel is made from food crops, such as corn, this puts the creation of fuel in competition with feeding humans and animals and makes it a much less cost intensive proposition than it would normally be. The company may be socially responsible when it comes to making fuel, they are going to have to work a little bit more to be responsible with their employees. The company is getting ready to get rid of 150 workers in order to make a reduction in their bottom line. The company is going to scale back in order to cut back costs on a joint venture. The job cuts are enough to qualify as a mass layoff action, which means there will be more than enough time for them to get their resumes out there. Whether or not there is enough time for them to find a new job is another matter completely. In the current economy, where trying to find a job can be a matter of months or even years, the few extra weeks of notice that the protection of a mass layoff action can give a displaced worker may not be enough time to find a job that pays a living wage. The new Iogen Energy program, which will run a smaller program in conjunction with Shell, will be an important part of the company's changes. They recently released a statement to the public about the changes to their work that reads the following: "Shell continues to explore multiple pathways to find a commercial solution for the production of advanced biofuels on an industrial scale, but the company will not pursue the project it has had under development to build a larger scale cellulosic ethanol facility in southern Manitoba." In the end the company, which has only been in operation since 2004, had to give up a significant share of its ownership to Shell in order to make things work. Shell now owns about 50% of the company. For now the company employs about 110 people, or more accurately they will employ that many after the cuts have officially been made and the staff is left to pick up the workload.

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