

JEFFERSON COUNTY TO LAYOFF 710?



Official Site of Jefferson County, Alabama

It used to be that when the going got tough and an economic downturn was coming your way one of the best places to ride it out was in a nice, safe, civil service job. In the current and long-term economic slump however, as many a city, a state and even the federal government face issues with bringing in sufficient amounts of tax revenue to support the current number of staff, that case is no longer true. While the average civil servant may have ridden out a longer run than the average corporate employee, they're now taking their turns at the axe. As many cities, townships, and counties begin to pull workers from the payroll and alarming rate many workers with no experience other than government are beginning to wonder exactly what will become of the economic futures? No doubt these are the current concerns of the workers in Jefferson County, Alabama. Earlier in this week Jefferson County announced plans to eliminate more than 700 jobs by the 5th of May. The cuts, which are set to impact 710 county employees are known only by number. Most of the workers for the county who are going to be laid off will not find out whether or not they will have a job until the Saturdays May 5 deadline arrives. This has left no time for the workers to prepare for finding other positions. After all, if you don't know if you're going to be one of the people out of the job how do you know whether or not you should be going on interviews? To add insult to injury the workers who get the layoff notices may not actually be the ones who are going to be out of the job. In many civil service positions, and in Jefferson County in particular, there is a practice known as bumping. If a worker with more seniority is given a layoff notice based on their job title, they can instead bump a younger worker out of a job by taking their position. While this practice only works if the worker who is bumping is qualified to take the position, it does lead to a certain amount of chaos in civil service layoffs. This practice while awarding workers who have been with the county for a long time does however howbeit painful tendency of driving younger talent away from civil service jobs during economic downturns. It may turn out that many of the workers who've been with the county for less than 10 years expect to be out of a job whether or not they received a layoff notice. All of these cuts are designed to help Jefferson County make up for a \$40 million budget shortfall. The layoffs are primary method of cutting that the county will employ but it will not be the only means the county will employ to make up for the significant hole in the budget. Other cuts are expected to lessen available in county services, such as closing courthouses on Fridays. There has already been a serious impact on the county workers, including an increase in absenteeism, and delays in paperwork processing, have already been reported as two of the side effects of the unknown layoffs.

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