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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

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GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES IMMEDIATE EFFORT TO TRY AND PREVENT BUTLER MANUFACTURING FROM CLOSING GALESBURG PLANT

SPRINGFIELD – Responding to yesterday’s disheartening news issued by BlueScope Steel that it plans on closing its Butler Manufacturing plant in Galesburg next year, Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced an immediate course of action to save these hundreds of jobs. Governor Blagojevich has directed the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to lead the state’s effort to prevent the plant’s closure and will deploy the state’s Rapid Response Team to support these workers in Galesburg in the event it does close.

“Too often major business decisions are made from the corporate executive suite instead of from the front lines. I believe a rash decision was made to close the Butler Manufacturing plant. We are going to do everything possible to keep this plant open and these jobs in Galesburg where they belong. The workers at this plant would be willing to do whatever it takes to turn this thing around, and we owe it to them to give them the chance. But, if the company decides to move forward with the closure, we’re well prepared for that too. We just opened a Transition Training Center in Galesburg designed to be a comprehensive resource to laid off workers, providing all the services they, along with their families, may need to get through this difficult time and get back on their feet and back to work as quickly as possible,” Governor Blagojevich said.

The Rapid Response Team will go to Galesburg to make sure workers are fully prepared for all future possibilities, including the closure of the plant.

"We are going to do everything we possibly can, working with the Governor and Rep. Don Moffitt, to save these jobs for Galesburg. This is the time to show BlueScope Steel that it can survive and thrive in Galesburg," State Senator Dale Risinger (R-Peoria) said.

“BlueScope’s buyout of Butler was just completed Tuesday. The very next day they decide to close the Butler plant? If the Galesburg Butler Manufacturing plant isn’t producing the kind of returns the company wants, it has a variety of options at its disposal to try to increase its efficiency and its bottom-line. If BlueScope proves to be unwilling to go down that road it is a great disservice to the Butler workers and the years of dedicated labor they’ve put into this plant,” State Representative Donald Moffitt (R-Gilson) said.

The most vital service offered to these potentially laid off workers would be the newly opened Galesburg Transition Training Center. In the event that the company’s initial decision to close their Galesburg facility cannot be reversed, the Galesburg Transition Training Center will provide comprehensive transition assistance to the workers and their families displaced by this plant closing, as well as other workers in the community needing transition assistance.

(more)

The Galesburg Transition Training Center, which the Governor is supporting with up to \$1.5 million in funding, will house a component that is unprecedented. This center, along with a satellite outreach center in Monmouth, is the first-ever initiative in Illinois to establish a comprehensive and dedicated community-based center to address the transition needs of entire families, not just the workers losing their jobs through plant closings. The formation of **Family Matters**, a Galesburg agency network comprised of 40 organizations in the area, is dedicated to supporting the family focused transition training center, the plan the center will employ to identify and address the needs of families as a whole, as well as that of each and every member individually.

The local Workforce Investment Board of Western Illinois, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and the Illinois Department of Employment Security are partnering together to provide this comprehensive suite of services, including assessment and counseling, employment and job search assistance, as well as customized education and training programs for displaced workers and their spouses. The center also will work with community-based organizations to provide work support services, such as childcare, as well as individual and family counseling and social services like substance abuse, stress management and financial management. Other key partners in this effort include Carl Sandburg College, Adult Education, the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services, Experience Works, and the Western Illinois Area Agency on Aging.

“We’re hard at work doing everything we can to prevent this closure and keep these desperately needed jobs, but, if it happens, you can be assured that the workers of Galesburg will be prepared to capitalize on new opportunities. Here in Galesburg, the Governor has put in place a comprehensive support network that lessens the burden on the displaced worker, allowing him or her to focus on not only finding the next job, but the right job,” DCEO Director Jack Lavin said.

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