

ConMetco's Rivergate plant closes; once employed 400

Machinists Union members clocked out for the last time Oct. 9 at Consolidated Metco in Portland's Rivergate Industrial District.

The plant, the company's first manufacturing facility, now sits closed. At the end, only 26 union members remained, down from about 150 two years ago, and 400 union employees 10 years ago, said District Lodge 24 Business Representative Scott Lucy.

Workers there earned \$13 to \$21 an hour as molders, tenders and heat treaters, molding aluminum and then machining it into finished components. The plant made hubs, cross-members and other truck parts for Freightliner and Paccar. Both companies are experiencing a slump in sales, but both are also shifting production abroad.

"As far as we're concerned, many politicians have sold out manufacturing in this country," Lucy said. "There's a downturn in the truck market, but it can't be discounted that moving things to Mexico is a product of bad trade agreements that have adversely impacted manufacturing in the United States."

The United States should withdraw from its current trade agreements, Lucy said, and not sign the latest batch of agreements, despite "feel-good language" about labor and environmental standards that Lucy said will be unenforceable.

Because their layoffs are trade-related, the ConMet workers are eligible for a package of benefits including extended unemployment insurance benefits and retraining and relocation assistance.

Several of the laid-off workers were officers of Machinists Local 1432. Secretary-Treasurer Larry Hendrickson and trustee Vern Needles will be allowed to serve out the remainder of their terms.

ConMet will continue to have its corporate headquarters at Rivergate, including engineering and management employees. It also will continue operations at Clackamas and several other locations in the United States.

SEIU's Dale won't run for AG post

Service Employees Local 49 President Alice Dale decided not to enter the race for Oregon attorney general, announcing her decision in an Oct. 16 statement.

The announcement followed several weeks during which she met with labor leaders seeking possible support for a campaign. In her statement, she said a statewide campaign was incompatible with the demands of being a mother to her 12-year-old son.

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