

Carhartt discontinues 'Made in USA' apparel program

Carhartt, a company that manufactures work wear, some of it manufactured by unionized workers in the United States, is discontinuing its Made in USA apparel program.

Carhartt will still produce some goods in America. However, the company will not keep the U.S. inventory separate from the foreign inventory, said Union Apparel House, an online retailer of American-made/union-made clothing.

For that reason, Union Apparel House and other online retailers that sell only U.S.-made products will no longer carry Carhartt clothing.

"The items manufactured in U.S. plants will no longer be separated from the imported inventory, which makes it impossible for dealers like ourselves to order just the U.S. products," Union Apparel House owner Max Henderson told the NW Labor Press.

Union Apparel House is located in Wyoming, Minnesota, and its employees are members of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades. Henderson is a former union president of United Auto Workers Local 683, whose membership was decimated by offshoring.

Henderson believes that Carhartt is slowly moving to offshore all of its

manufacturing. "About 85 percent of their product already is made outside the U.S.," he said.

Henderson suggests that shoppers continue to look for the Made in USA label when purchasing Carhartt clothing. "Once that inventory is gone, though, there won't be any way of knowing what is made where," he said.

Union Apparel House has a full line of Carhartt clothes made in the U.S. Their Web site is www.unionlabel.com.

Earlier this year, Carhartt surprised Glasgow, Kentucky, city officials by announcing that it will close a distribution center and sortation plant in March 2010, eliminating 100 jobs. The facilities have operated there since 1993.

In June, the company closed a sorting plant in Marrowbone, Kentucky, and a distribution facility in Illinois, cutting 33 jobs.

A company spokeswoman told the Glasgow Daily Times that Carhartt expanded facilities in other locations and decided to consolidate its distribution and sorting operations into those buildings.

Carhartt, based in Bowling Green, Michigan, is family owned and has operated for about 120 years. It employs about 3,500 workers worldwide.



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