

Crown Cork & Seal shuts Portland can-making plant

Union workers at Crown Cork & Seal in North Portland — members of Machinists Lodges 63, 1432 and Teamsters Local 206 — were notified on Veterans Day that the plant was shutting down, effective immediately.

The can manufacturer is owned by Crown Holdings Inc., a publicly-traded company based in Philadelphia. Last year it had sales of \$7.94 billion.

The Machinists represent 18 workers at the plant, and the Teamsters have 10 members. Most were on layoff when the announcement was made.

“Only four of our people were working when the meeting was called. The rest got a notification letter in the mail,” said Scott Lucy, a business representative at Machinist District W24.

Lucy said four employees will be maintained for a short while to decommission the plant located at 10200 N. Lombard St. in St. Johns. Three Teamsters also will stay on to help close, according to Local 206 Business Agent Dan O’Keefe.

In March, the Machinists had ratified a new three-year national agreement with the company. The union represents approximately 300 workers at Crown Holdings can manufacturing plants in Olympia, Washington; La

Crosse, Wisconsin; Mankato, Minnesota; and Omaha, Nebraska.

Lucy said that during bargaining the possibility of plant closures was never discussed.

O’Keefe said the Teamsters have been trying to get the company to the bargaining table since their last contract expired in April of this year. The contract had been extended when the closure was announced.

Both unions have severance language in their contracts. The Machinists Union has made a request for impact-and-effects bargaining to improve the deal for the stunned employees. O’Keefe told the Labor Press that the company had indicated to him that it wouldn’t do more than what the contract calls for.

Most of the workers are longtime employees in their 50s. One Teamster had over 40 years at the plant. Pay was in the \$20- to \$27-an-hour range, with health insurance and pensions.

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