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INSIDE:

Old Fort Players announce cast for upcoming "Misconceptions" production.

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Pen City Current Curre

Siemens cuts 202

Local elected, economic officials hope area can absorb skilled workforce

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG

PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - Local economic and elected officials are wrestling today with news of more than 200 permanent layoffs at the Siemens wind blade facility in Fort Madison.

Employees at the plant were notified in meetings late Tuesday and early Wednesday about the company's decision to offer permanent severance packages to 202 employees

Kaile Gurney, a Siemens Gamesa spokesperson, said the company informed employees today about efforts to position the Fort Madison plant for the future.

"Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy informed employees today about efforts to position the Fort Madison plant for future competitiveness," she wrote in an email to Pen City Current.

"Business volume at this location through the 2018 fiscal year does not support the existing workforce level. While we remain strongly committed to the long-term viability of the U.S. wind market, a difficult decision has been made to adjust the Fort Madison workforce by about 200 employees. As a reflection of the importance of Fort Madison to our business strategy moving forward, we are making a significant capital investment at the plant to install additional blade molds for new wind turbine models."

Gurney said all affected employees will receive 60 days pay in lieu of notice and approximately 330 employees remain on staff. She said future staffing will depend on the market and product lines.

"Headcount is always based on the needs of the business. We are currently retooling the factories to accommodate additional product lines. With these capital investments and expected increased delivery schedules, we do anticipate some employee recalls later this year," she said.

An email addressed to Fort Madison Mayor Brad Randolph, Keokuk Mayor Tom Marion, and other local and county officials was sent this morning by Siemens Plant Manager Tony McDowell.

"Dear Mayors Randolph and Marion, Cities of Fort



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Employees of the Siemens wind blade facility were notified late Tuesday and early Wednesday that the company was eliminating 202 jobs, or 38% of its workforce. The employees were offered 60 days pay as part of the company's severance package.

Madison and Keokuk, and Lee County Officials,

I regret to inform you that effective today, January 24, the Siemens Gamesa management team must share a difficult decision with our employees. Unfortunately, our business volume through FY2018 does



RANDOLPH

I guess I
would have to say
I'm deeply
disappointed.
While I don't

"

understand the business model and changes with the merger, they have do what's right for the company."

-Brad Randolph, Fort Madison Mayor

not support our existing workforce level, requiring a temporary workforce reduction of 202 employees. While decisions that impact our employees and communities are never easy, this decision is necessary to properly size our workforce. All affected employees will be provided a comprehensive package appropriate to their years of service. Naturally, positive changes in the business situation will result in the call back of those employees according to company policy.

I want to reassure you that Siemens Gamesa is making significant capital investments in Fort Madison to

reconfigure and retool our factory as we update a product line and install new blade molds. With these capital improvements, we are positioning ourselves for long-term growth. Siemens Gamesa remains strong-



KEARNS

It's unfortunate that it's occuring and 200 people will be

"

losing their jobs. We can hope it's a blip."

-Jerry Kearns, State Representative (D)

ly committed to wind power in the United States and Canada, and our plants in Iowa and Kansas are critical to our business strategy."

Randolph said the news was disappointing and hopefully the retooling the plant will allow some of the jobs to return.

"I guess I would just say I'm deeply disappointed. While I don't understand the business model and changes with the merger, they have to do what's right for the company," Randolph said. "It ends up being at the expense of our community in terms of workforce and families and those 202 people that are greatly af-

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Local News/The Record

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Report

01/23/18 - 8:07 a.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 1300 block of Avenue F. 01/23/18 - 2:32 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 1700 block of 35th Street. 01/23/18 - 3:49 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 1500 block of Avenue H. 01/23/18 - 5:30 p.m. - Fort

Madison Police responded to a report of a hit and run on Oak Drive. 01/23/18 - 8:29 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident at 48th Street and Bluff Road. 01/23/18 - 9:22 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a burglary in the 2800 block of of Avenue M. 01/24/18 - 7:44 a.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 1700 block of Avenue B.

01/23/18 - 11:04 p.m. - Fort Madison Police arrested Jacob Russell Gilpin, 19, of Fort Madison in the 2200 block of Avenue D. on charges of disorderly conduct, interference with official acts, possession of alcohol under legal age. He was taken to the Lee County Jail and held. 01/23/18 - 11:04 p.m. - Fort Madison Police cited Lynsey Russell Gilpin, 43, of Fort Madison in the 2200 block of Avenue D, on charges of possession of drug paraphernalia. He was

Lee County Sheriff's report,

01/23/18 - 6:40 p.m. - Lee County Sheriff's deputies arrested Lena Mae Tuttle, 45, of Farmington, in the 2400 block of Hwy. 2 in Donnellson on a temporary hold. He was taken to Lee County Jail and then released on bond.

Fort Madison Fire & Rescue report

01/23/18 - Fort Madison firefighters responded to four medical calls.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

OFP announces Misconception's cast

FORT MADISON - Old Fort Players and Scott's Company are proud to announce the cast of the Old Fort Players upcoming February production. Misconception's is a two-act play written by Michael Vukadinovich and performed by permission of Eldridge Publishing Co., Lancaster, PA.

Misconception's is the story of two sisters who do not always see eye to eye. When mother comes to visit they always try to upstage one another. One sister goes to a wedding and the other sister goes to a funeral where she gets pregnant. Well not really but it makes for an interesting story when mom comes to visit. While at the funeral she meets an old boyfriend who comes to visit while mother is there. That is when the story gets very interesting and you won't want to miss a minute of the questioning by mom. The cast is made up of the mother played by Sherry Stice of Keokuk. The two sisters Claire and Dora are played by Erin Thurman and Deanne Niggemeyer. The boyfriend Peter is portrayed by Mike Randolph. There is one more character that will make an appearance at each performance that remains unnamed at this time. The play is under the direction of OFP veteran Carol Parson. Stage manager is Karen Dusek while Xandra Abel mans the tech booth.

The curtain will open on Feb 16, 17 and 18 and again on Feb 23, 24 and 25, 2018. Evening performances start at 7:30 PM and Sunday performances start at 2 PM. Prices are \$12 for adults and \$8 for children 16 and under. Old Fort Players Community Theater is located at 725 Avenue G in downtown Fort Madison. Anyone having questions or wishing to volunteer are welcome to call 372-9559. We can also be found at www.oldfortplayers.com or we are on Facebook.





5-DAY WEATHER FORECAST

THU 25 Jan



Clear Skies High - 45.3° F | Low - 39.8° F

FRI 26 Jan



Light Rain High- 49.7° F | Low - 44.6° F

SAT 27 Jan



High- 42.6° F | Low - 35.2° F

SUN 28 Jan



Light Snow High – 30.0° F | Low – 20.6° F

MON 29 Jan



Light Snow High- 27.0° F | Low - 26.3° F

OpenWeatherMap

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Current-Lee/Letters to the Editor

CURRENT-LEE

LEE COUNTY – Raffle tickets for Lee County Pheasants Forever 25 Gun Raffle are available from any club member or at the banquet. Tickets are \$10 each and are limited to 3,000. The raffle will be held during the chapter's annual banquet on February 24, 2018. Proceeds from the raffle are used to support the Tri-State Young Guns and Fort Madison Clay Crushers High School Trap Shooting Teams. For more information about the raffle, go to http://www.leecountypf.org/raffles/.



Pen City Current will list your event in this highly visible CURRENT-LEE section in increments of 25 words for \$15. Add a photo for \$5. Non-profit organizations are eligible for the reduced rate of \$10 per 25 words and \$3 per photo. To place your listing, click here or call Lee at (319)371.4125.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reader sympathizes with dislocated workers

The taxpayers will find some other company to give millions and hundred of millions to make new jobs. The fertilizer plant was \$2.5 million per employee. Lee County has had the honor to be in the top 5 unemployed counties in Iowa for 50 years. Last time I looked it was number 1 again. If it was not number one this will make it there now. We have good roads, airport, river traffic, and plenty of skilled and unskilled people and yet no company wants to locate here without a lot of taxpayer money. Why is that? This paying for jobs is getting out

of hand. Maybe ok if the job has a contract to be here 10 years or pay back the funds. There will soon be a limit as to what counties can pay to have new factories locate there. No one wants to lose their job and are new jobs to be given with the warning that it can be lost next week or next year. In other words where can one find more companies who have long life spans. Every lost job is a drain on the family and the taxpayers. Sadness for all.

James Easter



IOWA LOTTERY WINNING NUMBERS

Lotto Drawings

Game	Draw Days	Sales Cutoff Time	Approx. Drawing Time
Lucky for Life®	Mon & Thu	8:30 pm	9:38 pm
Mega Millions®	Tues & Fri	8:59 pm	10:00 pm
Powerball [®]	Wed & Sat	8:59 pm	9:59 pm
Lotto America	Wed & Sat	8:59 pm	10:00 pm
Pick 3 - Midday Pick 3 - Evening	Daily Daily	Noon 9:40 pm	12:20 pm 10:00 pm
Pick 4 - Midday Pick 4 - Evening	Daily Daily	Noon 9:40 pm	12:20 pm 10:00 pm



1/24 5 9 11 33 64 Powerball: 21 Power Play: 3



1/24 7 8 17 40 42 5 All Star Bonus: 4



1/24 MID-DAY 6 2 3 1/24 EVENING 3 9 7



1/24 MID-DAY 6 0 4 5 **1/24 EVENING** 7 2 0 3

Pen City Current encourages you to play responsibly.



Great River Regional Waste Authority is looking forward to continuing our efforts to manage our environmental footprint and help educate our communities on ways to help in 2018!

Things to remember in 2018 when recycling:

Please do not place plastic bags in recycling bins.

Rinse & Clean all food jars and cans before placing in recycling bins.

Flatten boxes for better storage and volume reduction. *Empty all boxes before recycling.

Place all recyclable products loose in bins.

Do not recycle wrapping paper.

Properly dispose of all electronics and household hazardous waste. *Click Here* for more guidance!

For your convenience:

- Convenient Drop-Off Locations in 10 cities
- Curbside Recycling Bins are available at our Ft. Madison and Keokuk locations
- HHW Collection Available by appointment during regular business hours at our Ft. Madison and Keokuk locations



Ft. Madison Main Office: 2092 303rd Ave Fort Madison, IA 1-319-372-6140 Keokuk Transfer Station: 111 Carbide Lane Keokuk, IA 1-319-524-6175



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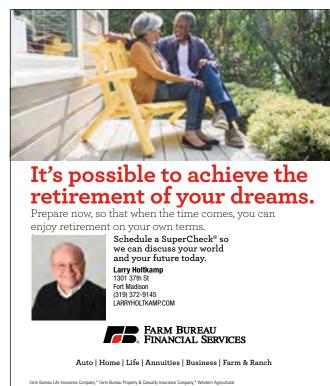
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From the Front

Local officials react to new of layoffs

Optimism in market rebound leads to hope of rehiring

SIEMENS - Continued from Page 1

fected by the layoff. I can only hope that, with what I'm being told in terms of retooling the plant for long-term success, that the layoffs would be relatively short-lived and they can recapture some of those people."

State Representative Jerry Kearns said he just heard the news this morning.

"It's unfortunate that it's occurring and 200 people will be losing their jobs. We can hope it's a blip," Kearns said.

"I don't know...the demand is down and I assume competition is up. They're aren't the only makers of blades, but it's too bad. They're one of the bright spots of Lee County."

Joe Steil, Lee County Economic Development Group's executive director, said they received no communication that the layoffs were coming.

"I had conversations with them when there were some rumors flying around in 2017 when at that point they had announced closing a sister facility in Canada," Steil said this morning. "I do know even at that point in time sales were in a slump affecting the Fort Madison plant because of reduction in hours. That was a fact and we all knew about that. Speaking for myself, all the coverage on renewable energy and what our federal legislators have to decide is very important and has an effect on Iowa's investment in renewable energy."

Steil said he sees the plant talking about retooling the facility as a reason to think the plant will not be issuing further layoffs or even closure.

"Being an optimistic person that is not the direction I see it going," he said. "I think there's a certain amount that needs to be said about when production isn't there industries need to staff accordingly. I see that as probably being the situation here. The



I had conversations with them when there were some rumors flying around in 2017 when at that point they had announced closing a sister facility in Canada."

> -Joe Steil, **LCEDG Ececutive Director**

other thing is that Siemens numbers have historically gone up and down and I look to the future when sales get back where they need to be to drive production and get those workers back that have been displaced."

Randolph said he was hopeful that there was enough demand in the area to pick up workers.

"Hopefully we have enough of a demand in the area that those dislocated can pick up employment quickly and we don't have to experience and don't have to go through people finding another community to work in because of the job climate. With recent federal action with tax reform and corporate taxes we see some responses from local industry in terms of taking some

of that tax relief and applying it back into local resources."

U.S. Rep. Dave Loebsack said the Siemens production has had its ups and downs, but has provided great jobs in Lee County.

"Siemens, as you know, has provided a lot of really great jobs



LOEBSACK

. . .I'll do everything I can to accommodate and provide

information to those workers and I just want

everyone to know that my office is open to anyone affected there. "

 Dave Loebsack, U.S. Representative

in Fort Madison and southeast Iowa. I recall going to the plant when it first opened when I was first elected. It's had its ups and downs just like the wind industry itself. Unfortunately in the past, it's had a lot to do with the inability to extend the wind tax credits in a timely fashion, but now that's set for the next couple years," Loebsack said this morning.

"There's no question its difficult at the moment to make plans given the political instability in Washington, D.C. But I'll do everything I can to accommodate and provide information to those workers and I just want everyone to know that my office is open to anyone affected there.

