

Tenneco makes last shock absorber

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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More jobs terminated last week.

With the departure of 118 main line employees from Tenneco last Thursday and Friday, 90 remain at the shock-absorber manufacturing plant.

“We made our last shock absorber on Friday,” said human resources manager Jay Edwards.

Edwards said the remaining employees will continue to manufacture piston rods through July 4. Then the workforce will be whittled to 25.

Those employees will make piston rods and stay on to maintain the plant until sometime in the first quarter of 2012, he said.

Shock absorbers will continue to be shipped to Ford Motor Company through July 4.

As employees leave, he said they will receive the same termination package as if their jobs were eliminated sooner.

When company officials announced in October of 2009 that the plant would close, Tenneco employed 460 hourly and 40 salaried workers at the plant.

The Cozad plant opened in 1961 to manufacture shock absorbers for light-duty trucks, sports utility vehicles and commercial speciality applications.

Since the closure was announced, Tenneco, state and county officials have assisted employees in finding new jobs as well as trying to sell the building to a new business.

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On Tuesday, Edwards said Dawson Area Development was hosting another job fair in Cozad.

He described Tenneco workers as resilient and compared the closing of Tenneco to graduation since employees have the opportunity to look at different employment options.

Edwards, whose last day at the plant is June 16, said he hopes to do human resource work in the area.

“We thank everyone for the support they have given us,” he said.

Tenneco officials decided to close the plant because of its proximity to customers, logistic costs and the fact that other Tenneco plants in the United States could accommodate production from the Cozad plant.

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