

Potlatch cuts 33 jobs at St. Maries Complex

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Published: Tuesday, February 17, 2009 5:09 PM PST

Thirty three workers at Potlatch Corporation found out this week that they no longer have a job at the St. Maries Complex.

Workers from the plywood to the lumber side were informed of cuts that could last until an upturn in the wood products market.

The cuts were made from throughout the operation, said Mark Benson, vice president of public affairs for Potlatch Corporation.

"They came from across the operation with the majority coming from the plywood operation," he said.

Workers with the least amount of time at the mill were released without an assurance they would be hired back.

"It will primarily involve employees with the least amount of service time," said Mr. Benson. "The majority of people affected by the layoffs are the more junior employees."

Most of the workers had two or three years of service, he said.

The cuts came three weeks after employees were called back to work on a part-time basis.

At the end of last month, after a week of having the mill close, employees were called back on a three-day work week schedule.

The mill will continue to run on the three-day work week with two, eight hour shifts Monday through Wednesday until demand for products increase, he said.

Seasonal layoffs this year are more drastic than in previous years because of unprecedented market conditions.

"These are very difficult times for lumber and plywood operations," he said. "We're trying to determine the most effective way to operate the mill and we believe we can operate with fewer people during these times" he said.