

340 jobs axed at Siemens wind turbine plant in Tillsonburg



'This was a very difficult decision': Head of Siemens tells employees after announcing plant closure

CBC News · Posted: Jul 18, 2017 10:35 AM ET | Last Updated: July 18, 2017



Siemens employees at the Tillsonburg wind turbine plant discuss news that the factory is closing January 2018 (Colin Butler)

More than 300 employees at a wind turbine plant in Tillsonburg learned Tuesday they will be out of a job by 2018, with 206 being given notice immediately.

Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy announced the closure of the blade manufacturing plant in the small southwestern Ontario town at an all-staff meeting.

In a statement, the company cited dramatic changes in the global wind market with tough competition and cost pressures.

"This was a very difficult decision that was taken only after assessing all the options," said David Hickey, Head of the Siemens Gamesa Business in Canada.

"We have a great team of employees at the plant who have produced quality work for the last six years, and we sincerely appreciate all their efforts.

The closure will affect 340 employees in total and will be conducted in phases throughout 2017.

Faltering green energy industry

Siemens was the recipient of an \$850 million contract with the Ontario government to supply 140 wind turbines in 2014.

At the time, they were destined for Goderich, billed the largest wind farm in the province.





One year later, Ontario's Energy Minister [Glenn Thibeault announced future green energy contracts](#) were cancelled to help lower electricity rates.

At the time, the province said it would not need more wind turbines for at least another decade.

'People left high and dry'

The plant closure nonetheless took the community by surprise with reaction coming quickly following the announcement.

Oxford County MPP Ernie Hardeman, who represents the region that has already hard-hit by job losses, called the news devastating.

"It's one of the largest employers in the community and now the people there are left high and dry," Hardeman said.

This is the third large employer to leave the Tillsonburg area in less than a year.

Ingersoll's Cami plant announcing 600 layoffs in early 2017. In Nov. 2016, Thamesford's Maple Leaf plant slashed 400 jobs.

- [GM axing 625 jobs at Ontario plant, shifting some production to Mexico](#)
- [400 layoffs from closure of Maple Leaf Foods plant](#)

"This is a real awful hit to the community," Hardeman said.



©2018 CBC/Radio-Canada. All rights reserved.

Visitez Radio-Canada.ca