

NEWSRELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Corrections program lays off five workers

Montana Correctional Enterprise (MCE), which manages the inmate work and job-training programs at Montana State Prison and Montana Women's Prison, gave layoff notices Tuesday to five employees.

The layoffs, which take effect June 27, are a result of declining revenues in MCE programs due to decreased product sales related to the economic slowdown.

MCE industry programs, which are self-supporting and do not rely on a general fund appropriation, have seen a steep decline in orders for the furniture and upholstery shops and in service requests for the vehicle maintenance operation. In addition, the cannery lost its source of funding to continue operations.

The layoffs, all at MCE operations in Deer Lodge, involve a production supervisor and marketing specialist in the furniture plant, a purchasing and parts manager and a mechanic supervisor in the vehicle maintenance shop and the cannery supervisor.

MCE Administrator Gayle Lambert said the layoffs were needed to reduce expenses in order to maintain continued operation of the programs. The layoffs will have no immediate effect on the number of inmates involved in the industry programs, but hours of work will be reduced to reflect lower production demand. About 400 Montana State Prison inmates are involved in MCE job-training programs.

"We recognize that this very difficult decision not only affects five valued employees, but also their families, their careers and their livelihoods," Lambert said. "We are hoping that the affected employees will apply for vacant positions within the agency, and we will do everything we can to assist them during these challenging times."

MCE, which has 82 employees, operates industry, vocational and agricultural programs that provide employment and training for inmates that are designed to improve their chances for employment and success when returning to communities.

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