

# 500 JOBS: Granite City Works 'B' blast furnace to reopen once again

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GRANITE CITY - United States Steel Corporation announced today it will restart one of two blast furnaces (the “B” blast furnace) and the steelmaking facilities of Granite City Works, an integrated steelmaking plant in Granite City. The news was embraced with jubilation from not only Granite City, but throughout the region.

In a release, U.S. Steel said it anticipates calling back approximately 500 employees beginning this month. The restart process could take up to four months, the company said.

Granite City Mayor Ed Hagnauer said this is “big” for Granite City and the surrounding area.

“The jobs it will bring back will help 500 families in the area,” he said. “We are ecstatic now even more than we were down in 2015. We were always hoping it would come back, but never sure. I think there were a lot of prayers and back-door effort from our political people that made this happen.”

U.S. Steel said the additional capacity will support anticipated demand for steel in the United States from the pending action announced by President Donald J. Trump, on March 1, 2018, as a result of the U.S. Department of Commerce Section 232 national security investigation on steel imports.

“Our Granite City Works facility and employees, as well as the surrounding community, have suffered too long from the unending waves of unfairly traded steel products that have flooded the U.S.,” said U.S. Steel President and Chief Executive Officer David B. Burmitt. “The Section 232 action announced by President Trump last week recognizes the significant threat steel imports pose to our national and economic security.

“The president’s strong leadership is needed to begin to level the playing field so companies like ours can compete, win and create jobs that support our employees and the communities in which we operate as well as strengthen our national and economic security. We will continue to support our customers with the high-quality products they have come to expect from U.S. Steel.”

U.S. Steel’s Burmitt continued: “We’ve worked closely and cooperatively with the leadership of the United Steelworkers to develop a plan that will help us work through the restart process in the safest, most efficient manner possible, while enabling longer-term collaboration designed to improve the plant’s competitiveness.

“We appreciate and thank the USW leadership and membership for their passionate efforts around the Section 232 investigation as well as in support of the restart process at Granite City Works. Together, we are committed to ensuring the steel industry remains a fundamental part of American manufacturing because American manufacturing is stronger with American-made steel.”

The company said it expects to provide information on the anticipated financial impact of the restart as more details on the president's executive order become available for analysis in the coming days.

Both Granite City Works blast furnaces and steelmaking facilities were idled in December 2015 and the plant's hot strip mill was idled in January 2016 in response to challenging market conditions, including global excess steel capacity and unfairly traded imports.

The pickle line, cold mill and finishing lines at Granite City Works continued to operate in line with the customer demand. The hot strip mill was restarted in February 2017 as the company adjusted its hot strip mill operating configuration to meet customer needs after deciding to accelerate the pace of its asset revitalization efforts. Granite City's "A" furnace will remain idle in this process.