

U.S. Steel Says Up To 1,000 Workers Could Face Lay Offs

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GRANITE CITY - In a surprising move in the holiday season, U.S. Steel issued WARN Notices (Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification) that the Granite City facility will be idled indefinitely. U.S. Steel has announced that approximately 1,000 employees will receive WARN Act notices. This includes the 400 workers whose employment was “temporarily” suspended in September without advance notice. Granite City Mayor Mike Parkinson said about 400 have already lost their jobs at the U.S. Steel plant and with this move, another 200 will likely be out immediately, bringing the grand total to 600, though it could climb to 1,000 workers out of work.

Mayor Parkinson expressed extreme disappointment in U.S. Steel over the announcement and said they are not operating in any way that the city would like them to, especially during the holiday time. He also said he felt U.S. Steel is trying to circumvent the WARN Act and he has changed his position in the situation as of Tuesday, Nov. 28, 2023.

“I am going to go on the offensive and start working to get U.S. Steel to clean up that area,” he said. “I am here to let people know we don’t want this to become a Pittsburgh. I want the area of the properties to be cleaned up and I will continue that fight in Springfield and in Washington, D.C. I have been in contact with the governor and our state and U.S. officials.”

When Parkinson refers to the look of Pittsburgh, Penn., Pittsburgh has long symbolized America's rustbelt, a stretch of the industrial Midwest and Northeast that once boomed with steel, cars and coal. The city developed into an area of a rusty reputation and has spent years attempting to revitalize that appearance to potential business and industry.

Illinois State Representative Amy Elik (R-Alton) issued the following statement:

“I am disgusted and saddened to hear U.S. Steel’s plans to potentially layoff up to 1,000 employees in Madison County. Granite City employees and their families have provided loyal, skilled labor to the steel industry for decades, and U.S. Steel is pulling the rug out from under them. U.S. Steel should be doing everything it can to keep the Granite City steel mill operating at capacity, and I don’t see the company making that effort.

“I am willing to work with anyone to help keep these jobs in Granite City. My heart goes out to all the workers and families impacted, especially during the holiday season. I join in the sadness and anger of the city of Granite City and the employees who have dedicated their livelihoods to the steel industry.”

Elik encouraged employees impacted by this layoff to contact the Southwestern Illinois [workNET Center](#) located in Wood River at 618-296-4301 to receive job search assistance and potential training opportunities.

"If my office can be of assistance, please contact my district office in Alton at 618-433-8046," the state rep said.

Budzinski Statement on Additional Layoffs at Granite City Works

Congresswoman Nikki Budzinski (IL-13) also on Tuesday released a statement on additional mass layoffs facing employees at the Granite City Works steel plant. Budzinski’s statement can be found below:

“Two months ago, U.S. Steel handed out pink slips to 400 workers as they blamed the United Auto Workers strike for reduced steel demand. Today, with strong steel prices and operations resumed at the Big Three automakers, U.S. Steel is planning to make these layoffs permanent while putting another 600 jobs on the chopping block. It’s clear that these layoffs were never about the market and always about targeting organized workers. U.S. Steel must be held accountable.

“As U.S. Steel works to close up their union-represented shop in Granite City and move operations to a so-called 'right-to-work' state, it’s clear that the company’s executives are more concerned with lining their own pockets than they are with the livelihoods of the workers who have built their company for generations. I will continue to closely monitor U.S. Steel’s Strategic Alternative Review Process as we maintain hopes that an American-owned company with strong labor relations can step in to better serve our highly-skilled workers and the Granite City community.”

"Too often, companies close down without giving their workers or the broader community proper notice. Workers and their families deserve better than a last-minute email letting them know they’re losing their job. While the WARN Act, established in 1988, requires certain companies to provide full-time employees with WARN notices in some circumstances, in too many cases, existing law doesn’t apply, or companies fail to follow the rules, and workers get left behind."

Congresswoman Budzinski has introduced the bicameral *Fair Warning Act* – legislation that ensures workers and communities receive proper notice in the event of layoffs. The bill strengthens the existing WARN Act to hold companies accountable for employment decisions impacting the livelihoods of workers and their families.

Senator Harriss Stands With Workers, Community in Granite City

State Senator Erica Harriss (56th-Glen Carbon) has released the below statement following the news from US Steel in Granite City to idle steelmaking leading to mass layoffs in the Metro East region:

“The news of the closures and layoffs is devastating for our steelworkers, our families, and our entire community. As a granddaughter of a U.S. Steel worker, I understand that these aren’t just jobs lost, but these are livelihoods and lives torn apart. The excuses for the closures will offer little comfort to the people who rely on these good-paying jobs to support their families.

“My staff and I are in contact with state, federal, and local resources to ensure we are in the best position to help constituents navigate the uncertain road ahead.“Our community helped build this company over generations. US Steel is turning its back on our workers,

our community, and our state. I stand with the hard-working people of our district and will do everything I can to support our families in the days and months ahead.”

The *Fair Warning Act* would update current law by:

- Updating the statute so the requirements under the law apply to any business that employs 50 or more employees or has an annual payroll of \$2 million;
- Updating definitions to ensure the legislation also covers an employer’s affiliate if they violate the WARN Act;
- Closing loopholes in notification requirements by expanding the cases where notification is required and including both full-time and part-time employees in thresholds;
- Increasing the lead-time for mass layoff or site closure notifications from 60 days’ notice to 90 days’ notice to provide workers, their families, and the community with advance notice;
- Requiring the state to establish a Rapid Response committee and an individual to lead that committee within 20 days of a WARN notice being issued so that affected employees can quickly get the training and other support services they need to prepare for their job loss;
- Strengthening enforcement provisions under the law to enhance compliance;
- Protecting employees’ rights to bring suit if their employer violates their WARN Act rights; and
- Requiring the Department of Labor to create and make public a searchable database of all WARN notices.

Mayor Parkinson continued to stress how his position with the Granite City mill has changed: “The roll mill is still in play, but I feel U.S. Steel has been deceitful and not a good business partner for this city,” he said. “We want them to move to another phase as they continue to close it. We want them to clean up the mess they have on the property so we can develop it for other industries. That push starts today.”