



Houston, Texas Struggles Due To Economic Tarriffs

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Another local company will close due to the increased cost of steel tariffs, as well as other "crippling" business conditions, according to a filing with the Texas Workforce Commission.

United Structures of America, a Houston metal fabrication and engineering company with facilities here and in Portland, Tenn. will cease operations.

The company's Houston plant at 1912 Buschong will close in September, resulting in 73 layoffs. Its plant in Tennessee will also shutter next month, resulting in 45 layoffs, according to a Tennessee Department of Labor notice.

In addition to the increased cost of steel tariffs, a recent cyber attack and financing issues also hurt the company. Employees will lose jobs in late September, at which point the company will shut down.

"The closing is necessitated by a number of crippling business circumstances that were not foreseeable," wrote Andy Smith, an attorney with Smith Consultants to the state, on behalf of the company.

United Structures of America is the latest local manufacturer to cut jobs and close operations as a result of

the increasing costs of tariffs on steel. In July, Tramontina USA Inc. said it would close a plant in Sugar Land and lay off more than 100 workers as a result of the tariffs. Sugar Land Texas, is located close to Houston, Texas.

Manufacturers have been hit particularly hard by the U.S.-China trade war. In Texas, manufacturing executives have said business is softening and tariffs are cutting into their profits as the duties raise costs on imports and retaliatory measures make U.S. exports less competitive in the global market. In a recent survey by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, more than a quarter of Texas manufacturers reported that they had reduced capital spending plans as a result of the tariffs.

United Structures of America's Houston and Tennessee facilities each have the capacity to fabricate 1,600 tons of metal per week, according to a company document.

Although the circumstances necessitating the plant closure are unfortunate, the company hopes to work with the Texas Workforce Commission in a manner that will enable each of the affected employees to smoothly transition to other employment," Anderson wrote.

Learn more here.

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