

It's time to save the golden goose



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— Bruce Kern, Executive Director
East Bay Economic Development Alliance



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Chain reaction from NUMMI worsens

By George Avalos

The employment toll to NUMMI suppliers from the April 1 closure of the factory in Fremont now tops the 1,800 mark.

The latest job cut revelation comes from TG Automotive Sealing Inc. of Hayward. John Wells, general manager for planning and administration for the company that owns TG Automotive, confirmed company's Hayward plant will be closing.

TG Automotive Sealing intends to eliminate 204 jobs and shut by July 1, according to an official company filing with regional and state labor officials.

Even worse, the shutdowns are spreading to companies represented by unions other than the United Auto Workers.

Janitorial and Teamsters unions will suffer job losses among their ranks as well when the New United Motor Manufacturing Inc. plant closes its doors.

"The impact of the NUMMI shutdown is unprecedented," said Bruce Kern, executive

director of the East Bay Economic Development Alliance. "Nothing has been this wide ranging."

The only prior event that came close was the shutdown of the Naval Air Station in Alameda, Kern said.

TG Automotive Sealing's Hayward operation makes rubber moldings, Rome Aloise, a top official with the Teamsters union, said during a recent worker's rally in Fremont linked to the auto factory's plight. The owner of the Hayward operation is Toyoda Gosei North America Corp.

"The NUMMI shutdown will affect our members, not just the UAW," Aloise said.

Plus, janitorial union members are also being affected. ABM Janitorial Services will have to terminate 77 workers at the end of March, according to Rachele Huennkens, a spokeswoman for the Service Employees International Union.

"This is very difficult, because the NUMMI shutdown comes at a time when the economy is particularly having difficult times in terms of the high unemployment rate," Kern said.

The total NUMMI-spawned job losses in the Bay Area and Central Valley are now believed to be around 6,500.

That includes the loss of the 4,700 employees at the auto factory itself on April 1.

This is going to require an unprecedented response by our local community, as well as local, state and federal officials," Kern said.

The suppliers are caught in something of a bind. That's because they are obliged to continue to provide goods and services to the NUMMI factory right up to the time it shuts down by early April.

In some cases, management in some cases is attempting to scout for new markets and clients for their products.

And like the 4,700 workers at the NUMMI plant itself, employees of the suppliers are seeking jobs, even though they are required to continue showing up for work.

"The productivity of the workers, the reliability of their parts, their component parts are not being recalled," Kern said. "That says a lot about the quality of the vehicles produced by the NUMMI plant."