

LATA lays off 91 local workers

Nov 27, 2013 | The Paducah Sun

Nearly 100 local LATA workers will lose their jobs by the start of the new year after the company sent layoff notices Monday.

Joe Walker, manager of environmental communications and outreach with LATA Kentucky, said 79 hourly positions and 12 salaried workers received the notices on Monday as part of its workforce reconstruction. LATA had initially said in July that it would lay off 145 employees, but the layoffs were put off when LATA received extra funding from the U.S. Department of Energy.

The money allowed LATA workers to work uninterrupted through Sept. 30, but Walker said because of the government shutdown and lack of a fiscal year budget, the company has moved forward with its layoff plan.

Jim Key, vice president of United Steel Workers Local 550, said union workers are disappointed and disheartened at not only the announcement, but the timing. He said that the area's job market has been punctured by layoffs at the Goodyear tire plant in Union City, Tenn., and by United States Enrichment Corporation workers who have already been laid off. The one-month warning officially sets the date for the layoffs as Dec. 26, one day after Christmas.

"There's a lot of our workers that have to go home and tell their kids that there will be no Christmas this year," Key said. "It's devastating."

LATA Kentucky, which consists of three companies, employs about 340 people. Next month's layoffs will reduce its workforce by about 27 percent. An additional 10 workers of one of LATA's subcontractors were also laid off this week, bringing the total to 101 affected.