



LOCAL

Spartanburg LSC Communications plant to close, idle 401 workers

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Published 7:07 a.m. ET Jan. 21, 2021

A longtime commercial printing company plans to close its eastside Spartanburg facility Feb. 18 and lay off 401 workers.

Chicago-based LSC Communications filed a WARN Act notice with the U.S. Department of Labor and S.C. Department of Employment Workforce. The Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act requires large companies to give employees two months' notice before a closing or major layoff.

The notice was filed shortly after private equity firm Atlas Holdings of Greenwich, Connecticut, acquired LSC Communications, which was announced Dec. 4.

"We notified the employees in December about this difficult decision to cease operations at our printing facility in Spartanburg and transition much of that work to other locations," said LSC spokesman Rajeev Balakrishna.

"This decision was made after careful analysis of the marketplace, competitive conditions, our customers' needs and our open capacity. We are working to assist our impacted colleagues as they transition to new opportunities."

Spartanburg County Councilman David Britt, chairman of the county's economic development committee, said the news is disappointing.

"It is never good news to have a longtime company close, but the good news is, if it had to happen in 2021, Spartanburg is the place you want to be.

"I hate to lose one company that calls Spartanburg home because they became family, but it is a fact that the times and markets are always changing."

The former R.R. Donnelley plant in Spartanburg was among more than 50 facilities and 14,000 employees that became part of LSC Communications in 2016.

Last year, LSC filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy with \$972 million of debt after a decline in print demand. A \$1.4 billion planned merger with rival printing firm Quad/Graphics was called off, and LSC restarted a cost-cutting plan to close nine manufacturing plants, according to The Chicago Tribune.

Last January, LSC announced it planned to close its manufacturing plants in Strasburg, Virginia, Glasgow, Kentucky, and Mattoon, Illinois by July 2020.

LSC Chairman, CEO and President Thomas J. Quinlan III cited "significant structural changes in the industry" in consumer demand for print books, magazines and catalogs.

"With many print titles moving to a fully digital platform, decreasing their frequencies, page and/or run counts, or closing entirely, our strategy is to further align our platform with these industry trends," Quinlan stated.

"It is always difficult to make business decisions that impact our employees and the communities in which we operate, and we are committed to supporting employees impacted by these closings with severance packages and transition assistance as well as relocation opportunities."

Britt said he can remember when the former R.R. Donnelley plant had its own post office because it mailed out print magazines for retailers like LL Bean.

"If my memory is correct, they even printed phone books," he said. "When was the last time you got a phone book delivered to your house?" he said.

Britt predicted that affected employees will have plenty of other opportunities.

"Our economic development team has, for the past 25 years, recruited excellent companies that will fill this hole in the road seamlessly," he said.

"Our biggest need in economic development is finding highly skilled individuals that are ready to help our diversified companies continue to make Spartanburg the place where businesses and industries excel."