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Tuesday July 25 2006

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Herrin council receives timeline for plant closure

By Julie Ratliff, For the Marion Daily Republican. jratliff@herrin-spokesman.com
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HERRIN - As the city prepares for the closing of the Herrin Maytag/Whirlpool facility, efforts are underway to help the displaced workers re-enter the job market.

Kathy Lively, Executive Director of Man-Tra-Con, addressed the Herrin City Council on Monday night and presented a timeline documenting the steps her task force has established to help the workers.

Lively said she wanted to reassure the council that Herrin, the hardest hit by the closing, will be kept fully aware of what help is available.

"You have to understand this is like a death for these people," Lively said. "They are going to go through a grieving process much like they would if they lost a loved one, but we can help them through it. When they are ready, there will be a lot of people working together to help them."

Lively's group has been working with John A. Logan College and Southern Illinois University Carbondale and several other colleges throughout the area to help provide further education or re-training for the

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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
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Market Watch

NASDAQ Jul-25-2006 2:28 pm ET

Index Last Trade Change
NASDAQ 2068.19 -3.65
SP 500 1260.62 -0.39
Russ 2000 892.00 1.24
AMEX 1920.26 -1.43
NYSE 8098.81 -1.13
30 YR BOND 51.30 0.27

Jul 25, 2006 2:51 PM ET
ComStock 20 min. delay
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displaced workers.

That education is funded through a combination of federal funds and state support.

"We have people who are going to be finishing masters (degrees); people who are finishing bachelors; their associates; and some who need their high school diplomas," said Lively, "because when they started to work twenty or thirty years ago, they started before they finished high school, and they've made a good living for their families all these years without them. It's frightening for many of them to consider going back to school, but we're going to help them every way we can."

According to Lively, one of the most frightening things for the workers is making use of state services they never imagined they would need to use.

"These are people who have had benefits for 10, 15, even 20 years, but when those benefits run out, COBRA is going to be very expensive, and they may have to face using state-funded insurance and medical programs," Lively said. "That's something most of them have never considered."

Due to the number of people who will be re-entering the local job market, on June 1, Marion's One-Stop at Illinois Centre Mall has extended its hours for the convenience of workers on multiple shifts.

In August, the On-Site Transition Center and Rapid Response Team Workshops will begin operation and by September, the transition Web site goes online. In November, the Marion Family Transition Center will open.

Man-Tra-Con, working with local colleges, can assist displaced workers obtain financial assistance for education, including expenses such as transportation, child care, on-the-job training, extended unemployment benefits and even relocation allowances of up to 90 percent if it becomes necessary for them to relocate to find a good job.

"We know some workers have already left for other jobs," Lively said, "and if that's their choice, we wish

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them well. But, there are opportunities they will lose if they 'jump ship' too soon. We want them to know what all their options are."

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