

ManTraCon addresses Herrin council

By Ashley Wichle, The Southern

HERRIN - With less than six months until the imminent closure of Maytag, Kathy Lively is ensuring that the area set to be hit the hardest is prepared for changes on the horizon.

Lively, executive director of ManTraCon, addressed the Herrin City Council on Monday night. With the city's largest employer set to close its doors on Dec. 31, Lively said her agency is doing everything it can to make sure that all employees can make a smooth transition into the next stage of their life.

"There are a lot of people who care and a lot of people working together," Lively said.

Because the closure is due in part to international trade, Herrin Maytag workers are eligible for a number of additional benefits, including extended unemployment and unemployment insurance, Lively said.

An on-site transition center will open at Herrin Maytag in August, Lively said. August will also mark the onset of Rapid Response Team workshops.

Rapid Response workshops will see workers in groups of about 20 meet with team members to explore available state and federal resources and benefits.

Lively said it will take a community effort to get out information about the benefits available to Maytag workers.

"Your friends, family and neighbors have a very difficult decision in front of them," Lively said. "They're demoralized. It's very hot - 104 in there last week - and they're still doing their jobs knowing their jobs will be gone. Encourage them to come see us.

"We're about offering help. We've got the tools; we've got the dollars. They just need to know we're there."

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