

Sony closing NJ plant; about 300 to lose jobs

The Associated Press

Sony DADC announced Tuesday that it's closing its CD manufacturing plant in southern New Jersey and laying off about 300 employees by March 31.

Another 50 or so employees could be transferred to nearby jobs with Sony, according to The Gloucester County Times, which first reported the closing.

Lisa Gephardt, a spokeswoman for the subsidiary of Sony Corp., said in a statement released Tuesday that the closure is coming because of what she called "challenges facing the physical media industry."

In other words, in the age of streaming video and downloading music, people aren't buying CDs the way they used to.

The facility in Pitman opened in 1960 to produce vinyl records. It switched to CDs in 1988 and turned out as many as 18 million per month.

Last year, Sony moved its DVD production from the plant to Indiana and laid off 160 employees.

Pitman Borough Council President Russ Johnson said it's been clear the plant has been struggling for years. "For the last 10 years there have been rumors that Sony was leaving Pitman, but they always came back with something," he told the Gloucester County Times. "Unfortunately, now it is a reality."

He said the closure will hurt the workers who are losing their jobs, and their families — as well as the local economy and tax base.

Johnson said Sony's 73-acre site will be subject to a lower tax rate when the facility closes.

The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development says it will help workers make unemployment insurance claims and prepare for job searches and new careers.

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