

## Officials got no Schrade layoff warning

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**ELLENVILLE - Imperial Schrade failed to notify the state Labor Department of mass layoffs that occurred last week, according to Fawn Tantillo, director of the Ulster County Office of Employment and Training.**

Though the requirement under federal law is difficult to enforce, the department must be notified when a proportion of employees is to be terminated beyond a certain fixed number.

The "warn notice" gives the labor department and related offices time to react and reach out to those workers about to be displaced.

"We have a rapid response team," said Tantillo. "We get them in job banks and get them job training. ... We were not informed that they were doing the layoff. We probably would have done a job fair right there."

Instead, Tantillo said the office will reach out to those who lost their jobs when they apply for unemployment.

"That's how we'll catch them," she said.

"The Department of Social Services has programs. The Department of Labor has programs. We have training dollars," said Tantillo. "If they need training in a new area, we can help with that."

A meeting will be held soon to assess who the laid-off workers are and what skills they have, she said, adding they mostly live in Sullivan and Ulster counties.

"If they find another job here, we can do on-the-job training for those people," she said.

Staff in Imperial Schrade's personnel department told Robert Mathews, senior labor services representative with the local office of the state Labor Department on Friday that the number of layoffs is around 100, and they will be receiving a severance package.

The number of staff remaining in the building was being calculated, the Labor Department was told. Some have speculated as many as 150 were laid off and 250 remain.

**James Economos**, vice president of operations and spokesman for Imperial Schrade, could not be reached for comment.

"I think a lot has to do with the global economy and competition and rising cost of manufacturing in New York and the country," said state Sen. John Bonacic, R-Mount

Hope. "Globalization is hurting the working class in America and it's forcing them to get retrained for lower-paying work."

Regarding the company's citing diminished business in knives bearing corporate logos and other knife gift-giving, Bonacic said Monday that officials at Imperial Schrade have talked to him about it in the past and he has tried his best in Albany to kill legislation that would hurt that industry.

State Assemblyman Kevin Cahill, D-Kingston, said Monday he thinks most people have seen the writing on the wall in Ellenville and anticipated there would be some scaling back.

"I think it's ironic that in the very same news cycle that the governor is touting the comeback of the economy in the Hudson Valley we have these layoffs," said Cahill. "The governor's economic development policies have been an utter failure for the Hudson Valley. ... There's been no return on our investment of over 100 billion (dollars) in tax incentives and giveaways."

Imperial Schrade's local roots date to the 1870s and to the Ulster Knife Co. of Ellenville. Imperial Schrade is a combination of that firm, the Schrade Cutlery Co., which was founded in Walden in 1904, and the Imperial Knife Co., formed in 1916 in Providence, R.I.

The mergers produced the Imperial Knife Associated Cos., later renamed the Imperial Schrade Corp.

Cahill said Ellenville was once a manufacturing mecca, when roads was all it took. By today's standards it's relatively isolated and the economy has to be reliant on something else.