STATE OF MICHIGAN

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CONTACT: Rebecca Jarvis
(517) 373-3447

Kellogg Workers Receive Assistance

Schwarz, Vander Roest, Schauer Announce Grant for Dislocated Workers

May 23, 2000 — Senator John Schwarz (R-Battle Creek), Rep. Mark Schauer (D-Battle Creek) and Rep. Jerry Vander Roest (R-Galesburg) announced today that yet another grant has been allocated to help the workers who were laid off from the Kellogg Company–South Plant Operation.

The Battle Creek facility was shut down earlier this year. The majority of the facility's 500 employees were laid off Dec. 31, 1999.

"It is always traumatic for workers and their families when a company closes its doors," Schauer said. "This grant will help them move forward."

The $36,000 grant was awarded to the Calhoun Intermediate School District, a Michigan Works! Agency in Marshall. The funds will be used primarily for career assessments.

According to Pat Iden, a trustee/representative of the BCTGM - Local 3-G, roughly 100 former Kellogg employees have already signed up for the assessment.

"The assessment checks each person's knowledge, likes and dislikes, and dexterity and takes all of that information to see what jobs best suit that worker. Many of the people had been employed by that plant for 14 to 15 years and now they just don't know what to do," said Iden, who has been working closely with the former Kellogg employees at the union's Career Transition Center.

The funds from this grant will also be used for career counseling and other readjustment services.

"Anyone being laid off from a job they worked at for several years or more would need help starting a new career," Vander Roest said.

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"We have a definite need for assistance," said Rocky Marsh, business agent for the BCTGM - Local 3-G. "We've applied for every grant available and this is the second one we've received."

Earlier this year, the union applied for NAFTA benefits and was turned down.

"But through a bipartisan effort, we won the NAFTA grant in an appeal," Marsh said.

Approximately 250 former Kellogg employees have applied for NAFTA benefits which include income maintenance and also pays for some college credits.

"The Michigan Works! grant will further help our employees find jobs," Marsh said. "On behalf of all of our displaced workers, we're thankful for this grant money and for the various individuals who were instrumental in helping us get this award, particularly our representatives in state government."

"We are all thankful we have been able to help secure this grant to help these families," Schwarz said. "We will keep working to make sure all of the families get the help they need."

Today, approximately 100 former Kellogg employees are working, self-employed or continuing their education. About 250 of those laid off opted for retirement packages, however, many of them are still planning to pursue new careers. The average age of those laid off from the Kellogg Company - South Plant Operation was 49.

Funding for the Michigan Works! grant is administered through the Department of Career Development, working with K-12 schools, community colleges and local Workforce Development Boards to establish a comprehensive career preparation system.

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