

Seaswirl Boat closing Culver facility; 170 jobs lost

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

In an announcement adding worse news to bad for Jefferson County's economic future, Genmar Holdings, Inc., the parent company of Seaswirl Boats, said the Culver manufacturing facility is closing -â€“ potentially affecting 170 employees.

Earlier this month, Bright Wood Corporation, the county's largest private employer, announced that up to 140 workers would be laid off, primarily from their Madras location which is about nine miles from Culver. Seaswirl Boats, according to Economic Development for Central Oregon, is Jefferson County's second largest private employer.

Genmar calls the move a "planned consolidation" of Seaswirl Boats Culver operation into its Little Falls, Minnesota manufacturing facilities. The consolidation follows efforts initiated several months ago which involved the relocation of certain larger Seaswirl models and all Seaswirl sales, marketing, customer service and administrative activities to Genmar's Sarasota, Florida facilities and offices.

Roger R. Cloutier, II, President and Chief Operating Officer of Genmar, stated, "Seaswirl's Culver, Oregon facility has been a very effective manufacturing facility since Genmar acquired the company in 2001 and its employee group has been extremely loyal. However, we are continually pursuing various initiatives within Genmar that will improve our efficiencies within the organization. It recently became clear that moving most of Seaswirl's manufacturing operations to Little Falls, Minnesota will strengthen even more significantly Seaswirl Boats, the Saltwater Fishing Boat Group and Genmar as an organization. Our Little Falls, Minnesota operation, as most everyone knows, is the industry-leading state of the art boat manufacturing facility currently producing boats for our Larson and Glastron brands. Through this facility, Seaswirl will be able to leverage numerous competencies and efficiencies in the areas of manufacturing, engineering and transportation. What is most significant here for Seaswirl's dealers and customers are Genmar's new product development plans which are being aggressively pursued. Not only will Seaswirl's development plans be more efficiently executed utilizing the Little Falls and Sarasota resources, but the capabilities of those facilities can more effectively support Seaswirl's planned growth objectives."

The transition from Culver to Little Falls will take place over the approximate next 60 days. Currently there are 170 employees affected by Genmar's consolidation plan. Where possible, opportunities will be

provided to the employees to relocate to either Little Falls, Sarasota, or one of Genmar's other facilities.

Curt Olson, President of Seaswirl Boats, has elected not to relocate to Sarasota and has decided to retire after 19 years of service to Seaswirl Boats. Olson will remain accessible to the organization and assist in whatever way necessary through the transition. Bob Chew, Seaswirl's Senior Vice President & General manager, located in Sarasota, will assume Olson's previous responsibilities for the sales organization, dealer network, marketing initiatives, product development, and customer service.

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