

ALBANY-DOUGHERTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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For Immediate Release

Cooper's Albany plant slated for closure

Albany, Ga., Dec. 17, 2008 – Cooper Tire & Rubber Co. officials announced Wednesday that its Albany plant, which employs 1,335 full-time workers, will close following a network capacity study.

The closure process will take 12 months, company officials said.

The study, which was announced in October, assessed four of Cooper's U.S.-based plants. At the time, company officials said one of the plants could close. The other plants are in Findlay, Ohio, where Cooper headquarters are based; Texarkana, Ark.; and Tupelo, Miss.

"The losses are large and the impact on this community and on Southwest Georgia will be significant," said Jeff Sinyard, chair of the Albany-Dougherty Payroll Development Authority. "We cannot express enough how much we understand what these jobs mean to our city and our region, but more importantly, what they mean to our community."

Albany and Dougherty County leadership as well as officials with the state were engaged daily in meetings and calls with the local Cooper team and corporate officials.

"The state and the Albany-Dougherty community mounted an aggressive joint campaign to keep the Cooper Tire plant open. Cooper, like many other companies, must make difficult decisions in today's challenging economic environment. We appreciate Cooper's willingness to work with us during their decision-making process, which is a reflection of the longstanding, positive relationship the company has had with the community and the state," said Commissioner Ken Stewart of the Georgia Department of Economic Development.

"While we are extremely disappointed that the facility is slated for closure, we remain convinced of its continued viability as a business asset," he said. "We will continue to focus on recruiting new jobs for Georgians and will work closely with those affected by the closing of the Albany plant."

Cooper set a deadline of Dec. 1, by which communities and states submitted proposals to Cooper CEO Roy V. Armes.

“The proposal from Albany-Dougherty County and the state of Georgia to Cooper was aggressive and competitive with the other states,” said EDC Interim President and Chairman Bobby McKinney.

Through the study, 10 criteria were used to analyze each facility:

- **Financial benefits**
 - Total cost savings opportunity
 - Cost of implementing
- **Plant attributes**
 - Individual plant performance, quality and competitiveness
 - Plant level of automation and equipment reliability
 - Plant flexibility and ability to improve
 - Role of plant in servicing European market with Clean Oil product
- **Ease of implementation**
 - Operational impact on the network
 - Guarantee of customer service
- **Labor and government relations**
 - Labor and employee relations and work force flexibility
 - State, local government and community impact

These areas in which Cooper wanted communities to work, and these are the areas in which leadership focused.

Of those categories, plant attributes was the most significant factor.

“From a local and state perspective, know that everything that could be done was done, and that every person and entity that could bring something to the table did so,” said Albany Mayor Willie Adams.

“Our proposal brought together local banks, educators, residents, small businesses and area chambers of commerce,” McKinney added. “It engaged officials with Georgia Power; the Water, Gas & Light Commission; the city of Albany; Dougherty County; the Georgia Department of Economic Development; the Office of the Governor of Georgia and the Office of the Lieutenant Governor; and our Georgia senators and representatives as well as our Congressmen.”

For its efforts and support, the EDC thanks its city and county commissions as well as Gov. Sonny Perdue; Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle; Rep. Ed Rynders; Sen.-Elect Freddie Powell Sims; Rep.-Elect Carol Fullerton; U.S. Rep. Sanford D. Bishop; and Sens. Saxby Chambliss and Johnny Isakson.

The Albany-Dougherty Economic Development Commission is a proactive team dedicated to the recruitment, retention and expansion of industry for Albany-Dougherty County.