



MEDIA RELEASE

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Ripon Manufacturing Facility to Close; Fox Valley Workforce Development Board Leads Rapid Response Efforts

The Fox Valley Workforce Development Board has been notified of the impending closure of Polyone Designed Structures and Solutions, 100 Creative Way, in Ripon. This permanent closure will impact approximately 70 employees, beginning December 4 and continuing through March 30, 2018. Employees were notified of the closure on October 5. Polyone Designed Structures and Solutions was acquired by New York private equity firm Arsenal Capital Partners in Summer 2017; with Arsenal later renamed Spartech, LLC. The company cited “a change in business circumstances” for the closing of the Ripon facility. The Ripon plant, opened in 1972 as Creative Forming, LL, designs and manufactures trays, lids, clamshells, tubs and scoops for consumer packaging, food packaging and food service markets.

The Rapid Response effort for these displaced employees will be led by the Fox Valley Workforce Development Board, a 501(c)3, responsible for overseeing efforts to re-train and re-employ dislocated workers in Fond du Lac County, as well as the counties of Calumet, Green Lake, Waupaca, Waushara and Winnebago. The Board is working with local Polyone/Spartech leadership to schedule an employee outreach session, which will include an overview of the

services offered by the Board and the local Job Center, as well as information on unemployment insurance. The employees will also be evaluated for job readiness and begin the process of finding their next role.

“Nearly every employer along the I-41 corridor is seeking skilled labor to fill their open positions and many of these employees will no doubt find new roles very quickly,” said Anthony Snyder, CEO of the Fox Valley Workforce Development Board. “Our first step will be to evaluate them on their skills, determine if any are eligible for re-training programs and then work with them individually to create a resume and plan a job search strategy.”

In August 2017, Fond du Lac County’s unemployment rate was at 3.0%. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, this is slightly below the State of Wisconsin unemployment rate of 3.4%.

“Because this is not an immediate closure, the Board will work with company leadership to create a transition plan for these employees which will allow the Ripon plant to complete any remaining orders and allow for an orderly wind-down of operations,” said Snyder. “It’s a balancing act whenever there’s an announced closure sometime in the future. We have a mandate to do everything we can to help the displaced worker, but also ensure the employer is able to meet its obligations.”

Depending on the needs of the 70 permanently laid-off employees, the Fox Valley Workforce Development Board and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, may offer basic computer classes or a private job fair. The Board may also enroll them in a number of more significant training programs paid for by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

(WIOA), a federal program of the U.S. Department of Labor created to serve eligible adults, youth and dislocated workers.

“Every Rapid Response is different depending on the number of workers impacted, the skills level of the employees and the flexibility of the employer,” said Snyder. “At this time, Polyone has been very open to working with us to make this a smooth transition.”

The Fox Valley Workforce Development Board leads a number of workforce and job search programs in its six county area. The Board’s services are open to all residents. To find out more, please visit one of the six (6) Job Centers in Berlin, Fond du Lac, Menasha, Oshkosh, Waupaca or Wautoma, or visit our web site at www.foxvalleyjobcenters.com.

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Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (FVWDB) is a not-for-profit working to build a world-class workforce in northeast Wisconsin. Serving six counties — Calumet, Green Lake, Fond du Lac, Waupaca, Waushara and Winnebago — FVWDB collaborates with a number of state and local agencies to help job seekers gain the skills needed to find employment, and to help businesses find the highly skilled workers they need.

FVWDB is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Service Provider.

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