ArcelorMittal Begins Demolitions In Weirton

The Associated Press

WEIRTON, W.Va. (AP) — Weirton's landscape will undergo a major change as ArcelorMittal demolishes idle facilities in preparation for future sale.

The steelmaker announced Thursday that demolition work has begun. ArcelorMittal did not provide a timetable or details on which structures will be torn down. But they include the basic oxygen plant, which was closed in 2005.

United Steelworkers Local 2911 President Mark Glyptis tells The Intelligencer and Wheeling News Register (http://bit.ly/KChsWA [1]) that the blast furnaces also will be demolished.

The demolitions will make the properties available for redevelopment.

"ArcelorMittal is very excited about what is on the horizon for Weirton," said company spokeswoman Sunny Oh. "We are proud to play a significant role in the future of the Weirton community, as both a key player in the tin plate business and in the economic development process. Due to confidentiality requirements, we are not at liberty to discuss any further details."

Glyptis said such a drastic change in Weirton's landscape will be difficult to see. But he said the demolitions are necessary to make way for other development to replace steel jobs that have been lost.

"I think the worst thing we could do is put our heads in the sand and act like the world hasn't changed," said Glyptis. "We're going to look different, but the different look will be a very good look."

He said Weirton still has the Ohio River and other advantages.

"When E.T. Weir selected this site to build a steel mill, he did so because of the Ohio River ... the rail system, the highway system," Glyptis said. "Now we have an international airport (in Pittsburgh). ... As companies have come in and looked at the land that's for sale, they've found it very attractive."

ArcellorMittal plans to sell all assets that aren't needed for tin production, including Brown's Island. It will retain its tin mill, main offices and some other properties.

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