

Union Presents Plan To Save Jobs At GE Erie Plant

The Associated Press

ERIE, Pa. (AP) — Union officials presented a plan Tuesday to keep 950 jobs at a General Electric Transportation plant in Erie, but the company cast doubt on the proposal.

The Erie Times-News (<http://bit.ly/f76MQq> [1]) reports that the leadership of Local 506 said the union can save \$20 million a year in exchange for the company agreeing to keep all the jobs. But as a condition, the union proposed that the company transform its new Fort Worth, Texas, plant into an overflow facility that would be used only when the Erie plant is producing at capacity.

GE spokeswoman Jennifer Erickson said in a statement that at first glance the proposal doesn't position the company "for long-term success or help improve our competitive standing in the marketplace." She said the company is reviewing the proposal.

"We are doing everything we can to address the serious competitive challenges our business is facing in the global economy," Erickson said.

The bargaining process is scheduled to end Saturday. It began April 9 when the company announced plans to eliminate 100 management and 950 union jobs at its century-old Erie plant. The company cited a decline in orders and productivity issues.

The bargaining process gives the union an opportunity to offer proposals that might reduce the number of planned cuts.

The union reacted negatively last week to a company proposal that calls for a two-tier wage structure for new employees and asks the union to agree to mandatory overtime, job consolidations and restrictions on job movement and bidding.

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[1] <http://bit.ly/f76MQq>