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From Tila Hubrecht - Legislative Update Related to Noranda Aluminum

APRIL 11TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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New Madrid, Missouri - This week I had the opportunity to support Southeast Missouri by helping pass House Bill 2689 out of the House of Representatives. HB 2689 would enable the Noranda aluminum smelter to receive a sustainable power rate. It is a critical step to restarting the smelter's pot lines and getting people back to work. Without a competitive and sustainable power rate it is very unlikely the smelter will ever produce another pound of aluminum.

House Bill 2689 now moves on to the Senate and is my hope it will pass this legislation as soon as possible. There are only five weeks remaining in this legislative session and time cannot be wasted. The jobs at the smelter are too important for our region and this opportunity cannot be missed.

Information for Displaced Workers:

Missouri Job Center Programs and Services:

The Missouri Job Centers provide the following programs and services to Dislocated Workers:

- Assessment services to identify your skills, interests and other traits to help guide you to a new career

- Earn a National Career Readiness Certificate, a portable credential measuring workplace skills
- Career counseling services to help you explore potential careers, utilize labor market information and identify open jobs that meet your skill sets
- Development of an Individual Employment Plan to assist you in reaching your employment goals
- Job preparation workshops to assist with resume writing, interviewing skills and effective job searching
- Workshops on financial management and starting a small business
- Training and education services that allow you to earn a certificate or work toward a degree
- Work Based Learning programs to either gain valuable work experience or train On-the-Job
- Utilize Job Center equipment to conduct a self directed job search

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Supportive Services may be available to Noranda workers, living out of state, on a limited basis to allow for participation in Career, Individualized or Training services (career counseling, workshops, assessments, or training). Supportive services are not available to individuals participating in self directed services. Eligibility for WIOA Supportive Services is determined on a case by case basis and based on actual need. Allowable Supportive Services include:

- Transportation (mileage reimbursement, car repairs, car payment);
- Child or dependent care;
- Housing (rent, utilities); and
- Tools, uniforms, boots/shoes, clothing or books necessary for training or work.

Eligibility Guidelines for WIOA Supportive Services require:

- Participation in a WIOA Career, Individualized or Training Service;
- Inability to obtain services through any other source, such as faith based organizations, non-profit organizations, government assistance programs, etc; and
- Be able to show how the Supportive Service is necessary to participate in WIOA Individualized or Training services.

Trade Act Program:

The Noranda closure has been certified as a Trade Act eligible event. Trade Act offers the following benefits:

- Training Assistance
 - o Provides up to 130 weeks of full or part time training based on need and Labor Market Information (LMI); or
 - o Up to 130 weeks of Registered Apprenticeship; or
 - o Up to 104 weeks of On-the-Job training based on need and Labor Market Information (LMI).
- Trade Reemployment Allowance (TRA)
 - o Provides benefit similar to Unemployment Insurance (UI) for workers who meet specific criteria. When combined with UI, a worker may receive up to 130 weeks of benefits. Filing deadlines apply.
- Job Search Allowance
 - o Provides a 90% reimbursement of expenses incurred to participate in approved job search activities that are outside the worker's commuting area (commuting area is defined, in Missouri, as 25 miles one-way).
- Relocation Allowance
 - o Provides a 90% reimbursement of moving expenses when suitable employment is obtained outside of the worker's commuting area. Suitable employment is a job that pays at least 80% of the wage rate of the previously held position and is full-time, permanent.
 - o Provides a lump up to \$1,250 for other expenses (deposit on utilities, apartment, etc.)
- Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA)
 - o Provides a wage subsidy for workers who are 50 years old or older that pays half the difference in wage between the previously held job and new employment. Maximum

benefit is two years or \$10,000.

- Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC)
 - o Provides a 72.5% tax credit for health insurance premiums. This program is administered by the IRS (www.irs.com) and they define which insurance plans are allowable.
 - § To be potentially eligible under the Trade Act program, the worker has to be receiving Unemployment Insurance (and be eligible for TRA), TRA, or RTAA.
 - § HCTC is on a month to month basis depending on if a UI, TRA, or RTAA payment was drawn.

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