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Central Moloney plans another temporary shutdown

By Amy Riggan
OF THE COMMERCIAL STAFF

Central Moloney Inc. will begin a week-long shutdown at its electrical transformer components plant and a two-week shutdown at its transformer plant beginning June 29.

"We are continuing our efforts to make sure our employees receive the maximum possible benefits," said Chris Hart, manager of human resources and industrial engineering, explaining why the shutdowns are scheduled around holidays. "Both plants are going to experience a four-

day reduction in the production cycle during the month of July that is directly attributed to the continued sluggish housing market and the lack of new sales."

The "major component" of Central Moloney's sales is based on new housing starts, he said.

The transformer plant typically shuts down for one week twice a year for routine maintenance, Hart said. But he explained that an extra week was added to the schedule because of "a reduction of business." The transformer plant at 2400 W. Sixth Ave. employs 488.

Hart said the components plant at 5500 Jefferson Parkway normally shuts down for maintenance one week annually around Christmas time. But it will shut down for an additional week because of a buildup of inventory. The components plant employs 59.

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PLANT

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This will be the latest of a series of planned shutdowns at the transformer plant this year. Hart said it was shut down during the week of Memorial Day as well and employees still received holiday pay.

He said this is the first time in 2009 that the components plant has been affected.

All 547 employees at both plants will receive a day's pay in observance of the Fourth of July holiday.

Hart said the components plant, which opened as a spinoff in 1980, until now has been more insulated from the need for shutdowns.

"A few years ago we completed an addition to the building specifically for inventory," he said. "Their business has remained a little bit stronger than the transformer business has."

The transformer plant opened in 1949 as Larkin Lectro Products Co.

The components plant's largest customer, not surprisingly, is Central Moloney's transformer plant. However, Hart said some competing manufacturers purchase their parts as well.

"But the components plant is still tied to the same industry concerns and struggles that the transformer plant is," he said. "This is our commitment to not only fixing the inventory build-

up but a commitment to maintaining our workforce and keeping it as stable as we can."

Central Moloney laid off 40 employees at the transformer plant in April, citing the same reasons. The company began cutting days from its production cycle to try to preserve jobs

after having to lay off 100 employees in 2007, Hart said.

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