

KANE COUNTY
CHRONICLE

Elkay Companies soon will close STC factory

Unknown whether jobs would be lost

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ST. CHARLES - Eighteen workers could face tough decisions next month when the plumbing products factory at which they work is expected to close.

On Tuesday, the Oak Brook-based Elkay Companies announced the closing of a St. Charles factory. Elkay makes commercial- and residential-grade faucets at the plant, located at 2530 Production Drive, southwest of the intersection of Kirk Road and Route 64.

Through its plumbing products division, Elkay specializes in manufacturing stainless steel sinks and also an array of faucets, water coolers and drinking fountains. It also makes cabinetry under the Medallion, Mastercraft and Yorktowne brands.

Elkay spokeswoman Ann Rottinghaus said the St. Charles plant is being closed to allow the company to consolidate operations with another Elkay factory, located in Savanna, about 30 miles south of Galena in northwest Illinois.

A statement from Elkay said the move is intended to "strengthen the assets of Elkay's new commercial business unit."

The consolidation move is expected to be completed in November, Rottinghaus said.

Further, the move will allow Elkay to consolidate residential faucet manufacturing at an as-yet undisclosed fac-

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tory on the East Coast in December 2009. The company has not yet developed its specific plans for the fate of the workers at the plant, said Vicki Slomka, chief human resources officer at Elkay.

As such, she could not say whether any of the workers would lose their jobs, or how many might choose to accept positions at the Savanna location or at the East Coast facility.

Slomka said employees were notified of the pending plant closure before it was announced publicly.

St. Charles Economic Development Director Brian Pabst said city officials had "heard down the grapevine" that Elkay was considering closing the plant and relocating their operations. But he said company officials had not discussed the move with the city.

Pabst said the city intends to move quickly to try to find another business to fill the building Elkay is vacating.

"Elkay is one of the small industrial companies we have here in the city," Pabst said. "But we don't like to see anyone close up and leave."