

## County's second largest company to shut down most operations

By Kevin Schnepf  
Staff writer

Approximately 150 employees of Peters-Revington Furniture in Delphi learned Monday they will lose their jobs at the end of May. Carroll County's second largest employer announced Monday in a press release from parent company Chromcraft Revington Inc. it will stop production of wood furniture products at the Delphi plant May 30. The loss in jobs represents an approximate 80 percent drop in the Delphi plant's employment.

The release stated the decision was made due to restructuring activities and decreased sales. The Delphi plant will still employ a few individuals as

a warehouse and distribution center.

Peters-Revington employee Cheryl Dubes told the *Comet* Monday workers received the news as they returned to work Monday morning.

Peters-Revington held a meeting for employees Monday afternoon. Dubes said they were given details and provided options to help prepare for future employment. Workers were offered training specifically designed for employees of production facilities that are closed. A job fair also may be held at the facility. Employees were told those who continued to work until the plant closed would receive two weeks' pay as a thank you.

Dubes said she had hoped the company would see the benefits of the plant and choose not to close its pro-

duction line.

"It is my understanding this was the only plant to make a profit for the company last year," Dubes said. "We like our jobs and were happy to have them. We could tell it was coming. We just didn't know when."

Dubes said signs of the plant's imminent closure became more evident in recent years. Workers did not receive cost-of-living or other raises in the past four to five years. No profit-sharing checks were paid this year either.

"We were told there was no money for us," she explained.

Dubes said Anderson-Ray was different than previous company leaders in that he rarely visited the Delphi plant. She explained CEOs before him

would visit more often and even know employees by name.

"I've only seen (Anderson-Ray) here two or three times since he took over about four years ago," Dubes stated. "It used to be about people. When he took over, it was all about business and competition."

According to the Carroll County Auditor's Office, Peters-Revington paid real estate property taxes and personal property business taxes totaling \$243,614.30 in 2007. The amount was distributed by formula to the county, the City of Delphi and other governmental entities.

The company also pays income taxes. Information regarding the amount paid in 2007 was not available at press time.

Delphi Mayor Randy Strasser said Tuesday the loss was "not light" for the community.

"We've seen some dark days here," he said. "People are out of jobs."

Strasser said the city would be affected financially by the loss, but was not sure to what extent.

"We don't know exactly what financial impact it will have," he explained. "We will lose revenue by not providing as much utility service to the plant. Depending on where the plant's employees who live in Delphi find work, we might lose some of them and the revenue they create. The company was also a big provider to several community groups."

Strasser said though the situation

Continued page 6A

## No FEMA money for county flood clean-up

### Council preserves road money

By Debbie Lowe  
Staff writer

Carroll County Highway Department has been virtually unscathed by recent budget decreases aimed at aligning county disbursements with income. This is due in large part because the department is mostly funded with money from the state gas tax, grants for federal highway projects and Economic Development Income Tax, which is controlled by county commissioners. Highway money discussions have mostly been concerned with the lack of gas tax money for road repair.

However highway superintendent Ron Francis was singing a slightly different tune at the Monday morning county council meeting.



Francis was questioning a transfer from the Major Moves account to a new line item called "Flood damage and clean-up," Francis announced that, as a municipality, the county will receive no reimbursement for the cost of road repair and debris removal associated with the two floods in January. He estimated the cost to the county for the work at approximately \$280,000, which the highway department will now have to absorb into its operating budget.

Francis explained that although the county qualified for reimbursement, the state as a

whole did not.

"We can't continue to endure this," council member Steve Ashby said. "Little surprises like this are killing us."

Council member Ann Brown questioned the wisdom of spending the money for clean-up efforts for which the highway department would be responsible. Council consensus was that had the clean-up responsibilities been left to property owners, they would be, and are being, reimbursed for their expenses.

Francis replied the county could have left the clean-up for residents to do, noting that suggestion fit in with the loss of emergency workers and law enforcement due to a reduction in funding for the services.

Council member Ron Slavens said he was against spending Major Moves funds to pay for trash transfer fees because that was not its stated use. He suggested a transfer be made from dust control for the needed money.

The council approved a \$27,171 transfer from dust control.

### DLGF report

Slavens, Ashby and Brown, along with auditor Beth Myers, treasurer Jane Brewington, commissioner Loren Hylton and State Senator Brandt Hershman, met with Indiana Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF) representatives last Friday in Indianapolis. Finance committee chair Brown read a prepared statement to summarize the meeting, which was scheduled in response to the DLGF press release of the week before. The statement noted the county over-reported the amount of available money in the general fund in 2004, which led to budgets being approved the county could not afford.

Brown's report indicated DLGF commissioner Cheryl Musgrave noted that she "understood that communication problems (between council members, commissioners, auditor and other county officials) can be very frustrating and lead to very serious problems if not corrected."

"The biggest stumbling block (for Carroll County) is

Continued page 6A

## Family lives with autism

By Jennifer Archibald  
Staff writer

There's no sugar-coating it. Caring for a severely autistic child is frustrating, tiring, and all consuming. It takes a toll on the family.

Tony and Denise Dowden know this first-hand.

They have two children at home - Noah, age nine, and Jacob, age seven. Noah is a good student, plays sports, and likes video games. Jacob will be eight this month. He was diagnosed with severe autism when he was two and a half.

"As parents, we didn't see it," Denise said. "But my mother saw signs, such as flapping his arms, and she told us we should have him tested."

Since then, they have seen a lot of specialists.

"They've all told us something different," Denise said. "One told us Jacob didn't understand anything. We were told he should be in an institution."

The Dowdens are committed to raising Jacob at home.

"We couldn't sleep at night if he was in an institution," Tony said.

"We wouldn't know the type of care he was receiving," Denise added. "He couldn't tell us."

Jacob does not talk and is not potty trained. He eats things he is not supposed to eat, and he chews on his clothing.

Denise said Jacob is in constant motion.

"He never wears down," she said, until he finally settles down at night. "Then he wakes up about every two hours."

"I haven't had a good night's sleep in eight years," she said.

Jacob now weighs 80 pounds, and is harder to han-



### Tender moment

Jacob Dowden has severe autism and usually is not still for a minute. His mom, Denise, relishes those fleeting moments when he shows affection. Comet photo by Jennifer Archibald

dle. Denise relies on Tony to help her when she just can't manage Jacob.

"If Jacob doesn't want to do something, I physically can't make him," Denise said.

Tony, who is self-employed in the home improvement business, stays around for awhile in the morning in case Denise needs help in getting Jacob on the bus.

The Dowdens are adapting to their situation and are trying to find creative ways to make their lives a little easier - and better for Jacob.

"Slowly, but surely, it's getting a little better," Denise said.

They are learning what Jacob enjoys doing and what

has a calming effect on him.

"It's also helped that he's on a routine," Denise said.

Some of the things Jacob loves to do are run outside, swim, jump on the trampoline, ride in any kind of vehicle, listen to classical and rock music, and watch specially-selected videos.

He has to be watched constantly outside because he could easily run

away and get lost.

"He's also likely to eat mud, sticks, and dandelions," Denise said.

So far, they've just had an inflatable pool, but they'd like to get an above ground pool. They have seen a used one that they are thinking about

buying.

"He likes pressure, and that's why the water has a calming effect on him," said Tony.

"The Burlington Kiwanis Club bought him a weighted blanket, which also helps," Denise said.

Jacob goes to Pettit Park School in Kokomo.

"The school gave him a big exercise ball for Christmas," Denise said. "I don't know what we ever did without it." She said he plays on it and bounces on it all the time, and uses up a lot of energy.

Jacob's favorite thing to do is jump on the trampoline. He wants everyone to jump with him, including Mom, Dad, brother, grandparents, visitors to the home, and even salesmen.

Every evening, Tony takes Jacob for a ride in his truck, and they listen to music on

Continued page 8A

## Flora to take over Senior Center

Susan Scholl  
Editor

Beginning May 5, the Town of Flora and Midland Meals will take over operation of the Flora Senior Center.

"It's just the right thing to do," said Flora Clerk-Treasurer Joretta Tinsman. "Jeff (Sieber, Carroll County Council on Aging director) said he was considering closing our site and the town council is not willing to let that happen."

Sieber said recently on a Lafayette television station that the Flora site is the most costly of the Council on Aging's two senior centers - Delphi and Flora - to operate and money is

tight with the county's current financial situation.

Sieber said that the Council on Aging pays a part-time employee and provides a telephone at the Flora site. Delphi does not incur these expenses. The Delphi site worker is employed through Experience Works, a government program that pays the worker. There is no telephone at that site; radio communication is used instead.

Flora already provides the building, the insurance, maintenance and utilities for the site, said Tinsman.

And until the center gets a van, she said, the town "won't have a lot more expenses than we already have."

The town has applied for a grant to purchase a van and if the request is denied this year, Tinsman indicated the town will reapply for the grant.

Sieber said whether or not Flora secures a van, the Council on Aging will continue to provide transportation services to Flora because it is contracted to do so as a Medicaid provider through Area IV Agency on Aging and Community Action Programs Inc.

To qualify for programming through Area IV, Flora will need to create a board of directors, said Tinsman. Anyone interested in serving on the board from Flora or Monroe Township should call or inquire at

the town office.

Currently, the Town of Flora and Midland Meals are advertising to hire a director to work five hours a day, five days a week at the Flora site. The director will be responsible for the meal program and senior activities. Deadline to apply is April 11.

"We want this to be a good, amicable transition," said Sieber. "We want this to be a win-win for everyone concerned."

Flora will receive its share of the Title 3 funds for operation of its senior center, according to Sieber.

Monroe Township Trustee

Continued page 5A

**The Country Cupboard**  
Business Hours:  
Mon. - Sat.  
9:00 am - 5:00 pm  
1748 W 150 N  
(Crooked Rd.)  
Flora, IN 46929

The Summer Kitchen  
Fresh Baked Goods Everyday  
WHOLE GRAIN FOODS  
FOR EVERY MEAL OF THE DAY

**The Country Cupboard**  
Come and see the largest selection of  
**Bob's Red Mill Products** around.  
Selection numbers over 120 different products, more than 40 are gluten free.  
Variety includes: Flours - Mixes - Cereals - Whole Grains  
**NEW! NEW!**  
Salt-free Seasoning  
All purpose - Cajun - Blackened Creole - Garlic & Herb - Garlic Pepper - Mexican - Taco - and more to come