

Seneca braces for major closure

(KMZA)--The city of Seneca is reeling from news that one of its largest employers, SKF USA , will shut down its plant, putting 170 people out of work.

SKF USA, which is owned by the Sweden-based SKF Group, announced Tuesday it is consolidating its industrial seals manufacturing work. The company says the work being done in Seneca will be transferred to a plant in Salt Lake City over the next 18 months.

Mayor Joe Mitchell called the decision a “ huge blow” to the city. “It's a huge economic impact to our community from the standpoint of losing 170 jobs in our community,” Mitchell told MSC News. “Then of course having a facility that will be vacated...to make that a viable business location again.”

Mitchell said he’s hopeful the town will find another manufacturer to replace SKF.

City Administrator Matt Rehder says it’s unclear at this point the financial impact of so many lost jobs. “For the city organization itself, we are going to lose some revenue from the franchise fee that we have with Westar, through SKF, and then also from utility revenue from the water and sewer consumed on sight. We haven't calculated those numbers at the moment, we are going to do that eventually, and I'm anticipating a decent financial hit. The real issue is 170 people losing their jobs. That's going to be the real impact.”

SKF established the Seneca plant more than 40 years ago.