

Jim Doyle
Governor

Roberta Gassman
Secretary



State of Wisconsin

Department of Workforce Development

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

201 East Washington Avenue

P.O. Box 7946

Madison, WI 53707-7946

Telephone: (608) 266-3131

Fax: (608) 266-1784

<http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/>

e-mail: dwdsec@dwd.state.wi.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, July 19, 2007

Contacts: Jessica Erickson, DWD, 608-266-6753; Kevin St. John, DOJ, 608-266-1221

326 Sunny Industries Workers to Share \$800,000 in Back Wages

Many Workers Were Rehired by New Owner, According to Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen and Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman

MADISON – 326 workers laid off when their employer, Sunny Industries of Mazomanie, filed for receivership will receive back wages owed to them as a result of legal action taken by the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Department of Workforce Development (DWD). The announcement was made today by Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen and DWD Secretary Roberta Gassman. DOJ represented DWD to collect wages and benefits owed to employees.

“It is clear in Wisconsin law that plant closing notifications to workers must be provided, and other laws protecting the rights of workers to compensation must be followed,” Van Hollen said. “DOJ represents the Department of Workforce Development in enforcing the law when violations unfortunately occur. I am pleased the workers in this case will be justly compensated.”

“This successful action represents a win for workers and the community,” Secretary Gassman said. “Working with the Department of Justice, we have prevailed on behalf of workers who lost their jobs when the printing company failed and the plant closed. A total of 326 workers can now share in \$800,000, consisting of back wages, vacation, and health benefits owed, and notice wages owed by the firm for closing without the required 60-day advance notice. Best of all, the printing plant has been operating since February under new ownership, and many of the workers in this community are back on the job. I am pleased that in working with the Justice Department, we were able to bring a successful action to the benefit of workers, their families, and the community.”

Sunny Industries, a printer, had 400 employees when it filed for receivership under Chapter 128 (a state bankruptcy provision). The plant closed on December 23, 2006. The sale of Sunny Industries’ assets was held on January 31, 2007. The sale was subsequently approved by the court and has been closed. Synergy Web Graphics, Inc. purchased most of the assets and has re-opened the plant, and has also re-hired many of the former employees.

In representing DWD, DOJ filed a wage lien and a claim in the receivership. The claims were made for unpaid wages and health care claims. DOJ also asserted that Sunny Industries violated the plant closing law (State Statute 109.07) by failing to give affected employees 60 days advance notice. The state settled all claims for \$800,000.

Of the approximate 400 employees, 326 are eligible to share in this settlement under Chapter 109. The state was represented by Assistant Attorney General Richard Braun.

The settlement agreement between the state and Michael S. Polsky, as Chapter 128 Receiver, was approved today by Dane County Circuit Court Judge Maryann Sumi.