

U.S. Steel Announces Tentative Decision To Close Youngstown Facility

Edgar B. Speer, Chairman of U.S. Steel, announced tentative plans to phase out the company's Youngstown facilities last week. No date was set for the plant closing and according to Speer it would remain open as long as customers remained in the region. According to several Youngstown sources, U.S. Steel is not firmly committed to shutting its operations there.

The Youngstown area would suffer over 5,000 layoffs if the plant was actually closed. Another 5,000 jobs were lost last week when Youngstown Sheet and Tube closed its doors. This represents over 15 percent of employment in the area.

Speer's statement coincided with the campaign by the

Institute for Policy Studies to organize a workers control movement in Youngstown to purchase the Sheet and Tube plant as a cooperative. Already the United Steel Workers of America regional leadership, which was formerly opposed to the buy-back plan, is under extreme pressure to sway toward participation in it.

Business leaders in Youngstown who remain adamantly opposed to the scheme suspect that Speer is aiding the workers control movement which is approved by Undersecretary of the Treasury Anthony Solomon. Previously, Speer has emphasized his support for rationalizing the steel industry and has been the staunchest industrial supporter of Solomon.

Industry, Labor, Farmers Form Alliance For Growth In Michigan

Jack Woods, Secretary-Treasurer of the Greater Detroit Building Trades, flanked by prominent business, labor and farm leaders, announced the formation of the Committee for Jobs and Energy at a press conference in Detroit on Dec. 21.

The committee was formed at the same time a fight is taking place within Michigan over the form of a proposed state Department of Energy. Michigan Governor William Milliken is reportedly planning to model the new agency after James Schlesinger's federal Department of Energy with a concomitant policy oriented to a solar-based economy; he is supported by elements of the United Autoworkers leadership...who were conspicuously absent from the new Jobs and Energy Coalition.

The CJE has rejected such no-energy policies calling instead for "reliance on the nation's abundant and economical domestic fuels—coal and uranium— for the generation of most electric power. An economy that is short on energy is short on jobs," said Jack Woods, summing up the CJE's philosophy. "Our Committee will work for energy development on behalf of those who work and those who provide work...(To work for energy development) is not to pollute our environment...but to avoid social and economic pollution with its more disastrous consequences for all of us."

The CJE has yet to take a position on the U.S. Labor Party's proposed Nuclear Energy and Development Act (NEDA) — which details and immediate program for the expansion of fission power and the appropriate levels of research and development to bring safe, clean fusion power on line. However, Woods' Greater Detroit Building Trades Council officially endorsed NEDA last spring. The USLP has campaigned throughout the state to have the proposed Milliken energy bill with NEDA.

Aside from Woods, the CJE includes the following individuals as its directors: John R. Hamann, president of Detroit Edison; John D. Selby, President of Consumers Power; James Barrett, president of the Michigan State Chamber of Commerce; Stanford Arnold, Secretary Treasurer of Michigan State Building and Construction Trades Council; Elton R. Smith, President of Michigan Farm Bureau; and Rev. Malcolm Carron, President of the University of Detroit.

Michigan Program For Growth

Included in the Dec. 21 statement announcing formation of the Michigan Committee for Jobs and Energy was a ten point program for job-creation and expansion of the state's energy resources. The Committee set as its goal a Michigan energy program which will:

- *Provide jobs and economic opportunity for Michigan's workers;
- *Insure the continued ability of Michigan's industries and businesses to provide goods and services for our citizens;
- *Support the continued efficient production of Michigan's farms;
- *Provide for educational and health and welfare needs;
- *Maintain a thoroughly satisfactory environment;
- *Preserve the freedoms and opportunities which are the strong foundation of the American democratic system;
- *"Among the most basic of these needs is a job, which provides not only economic security but also a sense of achievement as a productive member of our society;"
- *Reliance on the nation's most abundant and economical domestic fuels — coal and uranium — for generation of most electric power and the conversion of industry from the indiscriminate use of oil and natural gas to coal, wherever feasible, under safeguards which are environmentally and economically sound;
- *Accelerated research and development of alternate energy sources — biomass, solar, wind, geothermal and nuclear fusion;
- *Measures requiring local and state governments to evaluate and consider the economic as well as the environmental impact of all energy proposals and projects.