

## Tennessee truck plant closed

Decision leaves Denton facility as Peterbilt's only manufacturing site in U.S.

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By Dawn Cobb / Staff Writer

Peterbilt Motors Co. is permanently closing its Madison, Tenn., plant effective Dec. 1, the company announced Monday.

The move leaves Peterbilt's Denton facility as its only plant in the U.S.

Customers of the Tennessee plant, which was shuttered in mid-2008, will be transferred to the Denton plant, where Peterbilt has centered its headquarters and regional offices for parent company PACCAR Inc.

"As the market improves, all that volume will come to the plant here for Class 8 business," said Bill Jackson, general manager of Peterbilt, which marked its 70th year of operation and its 30th year in Denton in July. Class 8 trucks are the latest models of 18-wheel transport trucks, used to carry much of the country's cargo.

"It's good news," said Linda Ratliff, the city's economic development director.

Denton's workforce likely proved an advantage when decisions on Peterbilt's plants were being made, Ratliff said.

"It's too bad for Tennessee, but it's good for Denton," she said.

The Tennessee plant was closed in July 2008, though not permanently at the time.

"We quit producing trucks at the facility in Tennessee and are handling all customer demand at this facility," Jackson said.

In addition to the Denton manufacturing facility, Peterbilt has two others: a plant in Quebec, Canada, that builds medium-duty trucks, and a plant in Mexico where the Peterbilt 320 series trucks are built for a variety of uses, from dump trucks to side loaders. Both the Canadian and Mexican plants are shared with Kenworth Truck Co., another subsidiary of PACCAR.

Because of renovations and updates in recent years, the Denton plant could possibly hit its highest productivity level yet — 10 trucks per hour — when the market makes a turnaround, Jackson said.

"We're prepared to build more trucks when the market demand increases," he said.

The Denton plant, which has a 2,000-employee workforce at its peak, is not currently operating at full capacity, Jackson said.

“We are not at our peak at this time,” he said.

The company reported layoffs in January, affecting about 172 workers, or about 8 percent of the workforce.