



NEWS RELEASE

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FORMER EMPLOYEES OF ETHAN ALLEN IN ATOKA ELIGIBLE FOR TRADE BENEFITS

Special Status Granted to Laid-off Employees Under Trade Act of 1974

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK – Former workers of the Ethan Allen upholstery facility in Atoka, Okla. have been ruled eligible for the Trade Readjustment Assistance (TRA) program. All displaced workers and on-site leased workers at the Ethan Allen plant are covered by the announcement. TRA provides assistance to those who lose jobs or significant work hours because of increased imports or a shift in production out of the country. TRA certified workers can access services such as income support, relocation and job search allowances, and health coverage tax credits. Those that need retraining for suitable employment may receive occupational training. The goal is to reconnect laid-off workers with suitable employment quickly.

In a recent ruling, the U.S. Department of Labor found that former Ethan Allen employees working at the Atoka facility meet all requirements to receive TRA according to the Trade Act of 1974 (19 USC 2273). There are three criteria to qualify for TRA. First, workers must be laid off or threatened with layoff. Next, employer sales or production must decrease. Finally, increased imports of products like or directly competitive with the firm's products must contribute to layoffs or the threat of layoffs. Once certified, TRA recipients must enroll in training, although the state can waive this requirement in certain cases.

Former employees of the Ethan Allen facility are also eligible for Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA), a program that provides workers 50 years and older, for whom retraining may not be suitable, with the option of accepting re-employment at a lower wage in return for a wage subsidy.

The USDOL report concludes "all workers of Ethan Allen Operations, Inc., Atoka, Okla., including on-site leased workers of Express Personnel, who became totally or partially separated from employment on or after September 8, 2005, through two years from the date of certification, are eligible to apply for adjustment assistance...and are also eligible to apply for alternative trade adjustment assistance..." The first day of eligibility (date of certification) is October 20, 2006. Separated employees who would like to take advantage of this assistance should contact their nearest Workforce Oklahoma Center at 1-888-980-WORK (9675).

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