

# The company is wounded, the workers bleeding

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LOUISVILLE — Karen England, looking for something better than her temporary job at International Business Machines, took a cut in pay and started work full time at Storage Technology Corp. Monday.

On Friday, along with 1,299 colleagues, she got the ax.

England drowned her sorrows with dozens of other newly unemployed "high-tech" workers Friday afternoon at Pasquale's Restaurant and Bar on Main Street in Louisville, where she had worked before going to IBM.

"I left here to go to IBM; and I left IBM to go to STC," she said, shaking her head. "Now, I'm out of luck. What more can I say."

Some of her former colleagues found plenty to say.

"Fourteen years down the tube," exclaimed Michael Chavez as he joined a crowded table. "I used to work 16 hours a day when I first started."

"Fourteen years of work in the trenches, and they took me."

For Chavez, 14 years as an international coordinator for STC was the only job he'd ever had. His most recent project was helping establish a company plant in Mexico.

Now, Chavez says, that plant is on hold. But he can't afford to be.

"I just bought a brand new house 1½ months ago. I got my new furniture put in Sunday," Chavez said. "I'll just have to work construction."

"Life goes on, I guess. I can't cry over spilled milk."

The ripples were felt up and down Main Street in stores where STC money has been filling cash registers for years.

"I feel sorry for those people," said Gladys Bata, whose son owns The Liquor Store, 819 Main St. "Those people come here and shop, eat and walk around a lot."

"I think it's going to have a lot of impact on this town. It's a shame for everybody, coming before the holidays, like Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas."

Gary Lee, owner of the Louisville Liquor Mart, 906 Main St., estimates his shop does between \$500 and \$600 more business on an STC payday. He wonders if that's going to change.

"Business is going to be hurt pretty bad," Lee speculat-

ed. "Today, it will be pretty good, but in the long run, it's bound to hurt us, for sure."

Clair Beckman, president of the nearby First National Bank of Louisville, said her bank is prepared to give special consideration to victims of the STC cutback.

"We have a lot of individual customers who have their car payments with us," Beckman said.

"We hope they'll keep making those payments, but if they're fair to us and tell us they have a problem, we're not heartless people. We'll work with them."

Bob Carter, general manager of Pasquale's, believes Louisville might feel a 20 percent slackening of business.

For Carter, it meant scheduling extra help at the bar and in the kitchen Friday, as the STC wake continued throughout the afternoon and into the evening.

And for those who will wake up Saturday without a job, it means competing for work in a market that, locally, is suddenly flooded with highly qualified workers.

Maria ~~Chavez~~ ~~lost~~ out loose by STC after more than three years, said, "I guess I'm just going to kick back for a while."

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