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Idle Mines

South Pasture Mine Closure 'Temporary' As Mosaic Sees Stiffer Overseas Competition

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Of The Herald-Advocate

Mosaic is idling its South Pasture Mine facility in Fort Green and relocating the entire 158-person workforce until market conditions improve.

All employees will be offered positions at various Mosaic facilities in Florida although many employees will be required to switch positions or work for different wages.

Heather Nedley, the local public affairs manager for Mosaic, said the move is "temporary" but could not say if or when the mine would re-

sume normal operations.

Currently three draglines are operating at the South Pasture Mine.

Plans are to shut down two of the machines while continuing to operate the third dragline with all its ore being pumped to the Four Corners Mine for processing.

The float plant in Fort Green will not be operated during the closure.

Nedley said the closure was related to the Plant City chemical plant being shut down in December, stating "our mines are currently **See MINE A2**

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producing phosphate rock in excess of what is being utilized at our manufacturing facilities."

"The idling is temporary as the South Pasture mine plays a critical role in the long term future of our phosphates business," she said.

Nedley said Mosaic's reclamation and operations teams are working through plans to determine what reclamation activities will take place during the closure.

"We are committed to meeting our reclamation obligations," she said. "In the near term, we plan to utilize some of the stockpiled sand tailings and overburden materials to further the reclamation work."

Mosaic's application for the proposed Ona Mine, which joins the South Pasture mine and received local approval in July, included a pipeline route that would allow the company to send matrix mined in Hardee County to the Four Corners facility, potentially eliminating the need for the Fort Green float plant.

Last December, Mosaic CEO Joc O'Rourke announced the closure of the Plant City facility during the company's third-quarter earnings release.

"Plant City is the highest-cost facility amongst our Florida operations, and it requires a disproportionate amount of sustaining capital each year," he said when an-

nouncing the news.

Last year, Nedley did not expect the South Pasture operations to be affected by the Plant City closure, stating the rock from that facility would either be trucked or railed to other Mosaic processing plants.

All previous employees of the mine will begin at their new facilities on Monday after the mothballing preparation has been completed.

Mosaic will consider reopening both facilities in the future if demand increases.

Globally there is an oversupply of phosphate fertilizer products as China, Saudi Arabia and Morocco have all recently increased production.