KMU batting for P1,200 'family living wage'

US steelworker shortage could negate Trump tariff strategy

BLYTHEVILLE, Arkansas — Thomas Reisinger commutes almost an hour-and-a-half each way for a job in a cavernous steel processing plant here.

"I don't speed," he said dryly.

Some of his coworkers come from much farther, including one who spends workweeks living in a camper and returns home only at weekends. This corner of eastern Arkansas is dotted with RV parks that cater to such workers.

America will need many more like them to achieve President Donald Trump's vision for a hugely expanded US factory sector.

The steel industry — hit with 25% tariffs in one of the first salvos of Mr. Trump's trade war — is a prime example of his quest to use taxes on imports to rebuild manufacturing in the American heartland.

But foreign competition — while a drag on steel prices — isn't the biggest challenge for steel companies around here.

It's finding workers.

Mississippi County's slogan is "The Land of Steel" and that's no exaggeration. Nearly a quarter of the 20,000 jobs in the county are in sprawling mills owned by Nucor and US Steel and ancillary businesses like pipe makers and other metals processors that have flocked here to be close to them, according to Chmura Economics & Analytics, an economics analysis firm.

Clif Chitwood, president of the Mississippi County Economic Development Foundation, estimates 9% of direct jobs in the steel mills are filled by workers who come from such great distances that they live in RVs or cheap apartments during the workweek.

"Many of these guys work four-day, 12-hour shifts — then have four days off — which make it possible for some to live five or six hours away," he said. Some even share temporary accommodation with workers on opposite shifts, he added. — *Reuters*

FULL STORY
Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or by typing the link
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THE Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) labor union said its proposal for a P1,200 daily minimum wage is intended to give workers nationwide a family living wage in the face of rising prices.

"Every worker has the right to a living wage... It is only right that workers charge this to those who are sitting and aspiring to sit in government," KMU Secretary General Jerome Adonis said in a statement.

KMU along with 30 other organizations have put together a "Labor Agenda" calling for wage reform, price controls, an end to contractualization, and strengthening union rights.

The groups represent workers from the agriculture, electronics, telecommunications, manufacturing, education, health, and business process outsourcing industries.

"Workers are fed up with policies that make us suffer in exchange for the profits of a few," Mr. Adonis added.

Labor groups have called on President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. to certify as urgent a bill that will impose a legislated national wage hike.

Senate Bill No. 2534, which seeks to impose a P100 national wage increase for private-sector workers, was approved on third reading last year.

The House version or House Bill No. 11376, which was approved on second reading in February, calls for a P200 daily wage increase.

KMU said Regional Wage Boards have failed to set appropriate wages and have not kept up with rising prices of goods. — **Adrian H. Halili**

OPINION

The onboarding process for pirated managers

IN THE WORKPLACE
REY ELBO

It took us almost eight months to hire a manager with unique experience and talent. Now that he has accepted the job, how do we make the onboarding experience pleasant for him? — Blue Sky

An organization is only as good as the people it hires and retains. This principle applies to all types of positions. While I can understand the difficulties in pirating first-rate candidates from other organizations, it does not justify giving that person special treatment, in the hope of perfecting a professional work relationship.

You may offer a new manager the red-carpet treatment, but what matters is the long-term relationship. If you think you can retain your best catch, do it, if only to show that you are a professional organization that can manage all types of people.

It's only a matter of time before you realize that any approach you take will not work the moment you breach an employment agreement, even in minor details. I have some experience in this. I once accepted a job without knowing that I was expected to purge an employees' union, which is illegal. I came to believe I was being treated as a sacrificial lamb. My experience was complicated by a difficult employee in my department who absented himself on a regular basis, without ever being disciplined.

That was a painful lesson. This taught me that a new job opportunity is not just about money or status. It is far more important that your personal values align with those of a prospective employer.

ONBOARDING

Don't rush to hire this special candidate. Find ways to discover if there is alignment of the candidate's values with those of the organization. What does the candidate truly care about? Does he value autonomy? How about creativity? Is the person driven by recognition, purpose, and learning experience? How about challenges?

Before making a job offer, ask the candidate to take an online test to assess his personal values. Use the same platform for all candidates in the shortlist. Then, make a decision. Now, that you've selected your number one choice, arrange to do the following in this order:

One, arrange pre-onboarding activities. Several days before the new hire's starting date, send a welcome e-mail to include basic information like starting time, dress code, and other related information. Ensure that all IT set-ups are done and ready on Day One. This includes the issuance of a laptop computer, mobile phone, and identification access card.

Use digital tools to complete the basic forms involving social security, family status, and related information. This frees up the new hire's time for important matters.

Two, customize the onboarding experience. Have a standard template for all newly hired candidates, regardless of their position or the difficulties in finding them due to their expertise. However, if necessary, small changes may be made depending on the circumstances.

For example, a newly hired vice-president needs to be given a formal introduction to other vice-presidents and other senior officials. This can be done with a one-hour snack party. The objective is to help the special and regular newly hired to feel welcome and supported.

Three, assign an individual buddy to the new hires. This is similar to the *senpai-kohai* (senior-junior) work relationship in Japanese management. The buddy system does not require the participation of the new hire's immediate boss, but other senior workers or executives to help the juniors navigate the intricacies of company culture.

Four, include the new hires in leadership meetings, if appropriate. This allows the new hires to be immediately plugged into all activities. Solicit their opinions, contrary views, or recommendations. This experience can make the new hires feel valued and recognized.

Five, provide other administrative support. This includes giving relocation assistance during the transition. Other assistance can include giving new hires copies of the code of conduct, employment contract, back issues of the company newsletter, and other such documents.

Six, announce the appointment in public. The announcement should include a brief bio-sketch and their photo posted on the intranet or company bulletin boards. Depending on the position, a full-length article may be included for publication in the company newsletter.

POLICY

Recruitment is a strategic activity. Finding the best people that align with the company's culture is always a challenge and an opportunity. Do not approach this activity without planning.

The key is to build a pool of talent and update the records beforehand. You must be guided by a formal recruitment policy that addresses the organization's mission, vision, and value statements. While hiring from within is often preferable, you must weigh the actual situation when considering hiring from outside the organization.

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Google, X next targets as Europe stays tough on tech regulation

BRUSSELS — Alphabet's Google and Elon Musk's X may be the next to face fines from European regulators, as they stay tough on Big Tech despite concerns of retaliatory US tariffs, according to three sources with direct knowledge of the matter.

European Union (EU) antitrust regulators on Wednesday imposed the first penalties under landmark EU legislation aimed at curbing the power of Big Tech, doling out total fines of €700 million ($797 million) to Apple and Meta for violating the Digital Markets Act (DMA) and orders to stop anti-competitive practices.

US President Donald J. Trump has taken issue with the new rules, believing they amount to a tariff on US companies. But EU antitrust chief Teresa Ribera dismissed fears that she may cave to US pressure and soften enforcement of the rules.

"Apple and Meta have fallen short of compliance with the DMA by implementing measures that reinforce the dependence of business users and consumers on their platforms," Ms. Ribera said in a statement on Wednesday. "All companies operating in the EU must follow our laws and respect European values," she said.

The EU's determination to press ahead with the fines raises a question over possible retaliatory action by the US, according to the International Association of Privacy Professionals.

"The US administration has declared it will consider responsive actions like tariffs to combat certain foreign government policies levied against US companies," said Joe Jones, the IAPP's director of research and insights.

The DMA, which was cited by Mr. Trump in an executive order in February, sets out a list of dos and don'ts for tech giants to make it easier for people to move between competing online services such as social media platforms, internet browsers and app stores and for smaller rivals to compete.

Imposing the fines shows that the European Commission has "bite" despite Mr. Trump's threat to slap tariffs on EU countries that fine US companies, said one senior Commission official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

FOCUS ON COMPLIANCE OVER SANCTIONS

Still, the size of the fines is modest compared to the eye-popping penalties handed out by Mr. Ribera's predecessor Margrethe Vestager in previous years. Commission sources say this is due to the short period of the breaches, a focus on compliance rather than sanctions and the Trump effect.

That leaves a question mark over whether Europe's future approach to regulating Big Tech could yet be impacted by political factors, the sources say.

The litmus test for Ms. Ribera will be whether she goes ahead in the coming months with an order forcing Google to sell part of its lucrative adtech business to address concerns that it may be favoring its own advertising services in a case dating from 2021, according to EU lawmakers and consumer organizations worried about weakening EU competition enforcement.

It would be the first time that the EU watchdog issues such an order in an antitrust case, underlining its deep concerns about Google's market power, according to Commission sources. Even Microsoft in its two decade-long antitrust battle with the Commission was spared such a drastic step.

Ms. Ribera will be encouraged by a US court judgment earlier this month which found that Google illegally dominates two markets for online advertising technology, the Commission sources say. That ruling could pave the way for US antitrust prosecutors to seek a breakup of its ad products.

The US investigation into Google and the Department of Justice's push for a breakup of Google's ad business may provide cover for Ms. Ribera to act, said Zach Meyers, director of research at the Centre on Regulation in Europe.

'NO LEEWAY IN ENFORCEMENT'

"It would be difficult for the EU to justify withdrawing its own investigation given this, unless US authorities imposed a set of remedies on Google which the Commission felt addressed its own concerns," he said.

European Parliament lawmaker Andreas Schwab, who led the negotiations on the DMA at the assembly, urged Ms. Ribera to stay firm and not delay her decisions on Google and X.

Low fines should not be seen as weakening EU competition policy, Meyers added, noting that having companies make changes to their business practices is more important. — ***Reuters***

SM Supermalls and Tesla launch Supercharging Station at SM Mall of Asia

SM Supermalls and Tesla Motors Philippines, Inc. officially opened the Tesla Supercharging Station at SM Mall of Asia on April 11, 2025, signifying a milestone in Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) in the country as the 128th EVCS in 69 SM malls. SM Supermalls Vice-President for Mall Operations Junias Eusebio (center) and SM Mall of Asia Senior Assistant Vice-President for Mall Operations Perkin So (right) joined Tesla Motors Philippines, Inc. President and Director Isabel Fan (left) for the ribbon-cutting and walk-through of Tesla's advanced EV technologies. Guests also experienced test drives of Tesla's Model 3 and Model Y vehicles during the launch event.