

# Steel company shuts down

BY MICHAEL ZWELLING  
TONAWANDA NEWS

LOCKPORT — Another company in Niagara County has decided to cease operations.

Allvac, a specialty steel company on Ohio Street, will "temporarily" idle operations on Sept. 13.

The subsidiary of Allegheny Technologies provides nickel-based steel for aerospace and power generation uses.

"It took us by surprise," said Tom Nicholas, union president of United Steel Workers of America 2857. "They're saying it's a temporary idling, but we've been through this before."

A portion of the facility was

shut down in 1997 on what was called a temporary basis, but production was never restarted, Nicholas said.

While the shutdown was surprising, there were signs pointing to potential problems, he said.

"We've been working four-day weeks since January for three shifts, but before that we were working 24/7."

A spokesperson for the parent company, which is based in Pennsylvania, said the idling is temporary. He also said, however, there was no planned date to restart operations.

"Ever since the tragic events of Sept. 11 ... demand has dropped of drastically," Dan

Greenfield said. "So we chose to temporarily idle the Lockport facility."

Greenfield said the Lockport facility will "idle," however, the same fate will not be shared by other Allegheny Technologies facilities. There will be layoffs across the board, he said.

While Greenfield and Nicholas disagree on the definition of the term temporary, Mayor Thomas Sullivan said he was hoping for a positive turnaround.

"Hopefully, the confidence of flying will come back and the plant will have the opportunity to be back up and running," Sullivan said. "Hopefully there will be a rebound."

Jan News 7/13/02