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## Downsizing deals - US Steel Lake Erie locks out Nanticoke workers

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The Globe and Mail reported that United States Steel Corporation has locked out the remaining 150 workers, who were not already on layoff at its Lake Erie Works plant in Nanticoke.

Mr Bill Ferguson president of the United Steelworkers Local 8782 said that the previous contract expired on July 31st 2009 and weekend talks ended with the sides far apart. The union had asked for a one year contract extension, freezing wages and benefits while the market for steel improved. However, company negotiators demanded sweeping concessions.

Mr Ferguson said that the company proposed rollbacks in holidays, wages, and pensions. He added that "What the company said was either we accept concessions or be locked out or of course here we are locked out. We had about 150 to 200 people left at the plant and I have about 800 on layoff. That's the reality, I guess, of being a branch plant to a large American corporation."

Meanwhile, Mr John Surma chairman & CEO of US Steel said that "We have an unprecedented and severe economic downturn and the most severely affected sector in the global economy has been steel, even though auto gets most of the news about it. I can only guess that the news of that economic downturn hasn't hit Ottawa."

US Steel has been slowly ramping up production in the US, but has not resumed steel production at either its Lake Erie Works plant or its plant in Hamilton. In a brief statement, the company said both sides had been negotiating for several months.

(Sourced from [www.theglobeandmail.com](http://www.theglobeandmail.com))

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