“Thanks again for your help! I believe we will get a few businesses in our area out of this!!”

Stephanie Arney, SPHR, Mgr, Jostens, State College

Jostens plans to cut 230 of its roughly 260 State College-area jobs by the third quarter of 2011, the Minnesota yearbook publisher announced Tuesday. The move will affect primarily production positions at the company’s plant in Ferguson Township, along Science Park Road, according to Jostens. It’s consolidating significant production operations at a new, state-of-the-art facility in Clarksville, Tenn., a company spokesman said. “The employees in State College have served customers very well,” Jostens communications director Rich Stoebe said in a phone interview with StateCollege.com. “It was a very difficult decision.” Excerpted from: Statecollege.com written by Adam Smeltz on April 26, 2011.

In April, Centre County woke up to headlines proclaiming that another manufacturer was cutting jobs and moving operations. This time jobs were going south to Clarksville, TN. The announcement was not wholly unexpected, but the finality of a long time community member leaving town was another blow to the areas manufacturing base. As in years past when local manufacturing firms had made similar announcements, the SBDC reached out to offer assistance to employees who may be aspiring entrepreneurs.

This time, the SBDC worked with Jostens (then) HR Manager, Stephanie Arney. After the SBDC called to offer onsite First Step seminars that would be tailored to address concerns of soon to be curtailed personnel, Stephanie checked with upper management about the feasibility of offering the seminar. They enthusiastically embraced the opportunity and offered to sponsor the seminars with a monetary donation.

The SBDC and Stephanie worked together to pick a date for the three hour seminar which when announced proved so popular a second date was added. Seventy one employees registered to attend the two seminars with 43 attending. Changing of schedules and work duties were cited as the reason many could not in the end attend the seminars. All were given information about the SBDC for future reference.

Following the two seminars, employees who were interested in meeting one on one with an SBDC consultant were offered meeting times the next week, again onsite at Jostens. Eight employees took advantage of that opportunity to discuss their idea and to find out how best to determine their next steps. The ideas that were discussed ranged from an event planning business to a small scale manufacturing operation to securing certification as a LEAN manufacturing consultant. By December 31, 2011, of those eight individuals, three had either launched their business or planned to soon into 2012. Several of the others are still actively exploring their ideas and have not yet made a decision either way.