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LaPorte County Office of Community & Economic Development

Closure Announcement Causes Rapid Response Team to Be Activated

The LaPorte County Commission and the Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED) is responding in force to the unfortunate news that a closure is imminent at Corsicana Mattress in Pinola. The following statement to the community has been provided by Mr. Eric Rhea, Chief Executive Officer of Corsicana Mattress Company based in Corsicana, Texas:

“Since Corsicana Mattress recently changed ownership and I joined the organization, we have refocused our commitment to being the industry’s leader in value-priced bedding. We have a long and successful history of producing the finest products and are extremely focused on our retail partnerships. We are critically examining every aspect of our business to assure alignment with that focus. The closure of the LaPorte facility is a business decision that supports our strategy. The business acquired Symbol in April 2021, including a plant in Watertown, WI. The Watertown plant supplies the same market as the LaPorte, IN plant. We simply don’t need two plants in the same area and have determined that the Watertown plant can more effectively serve our customers in this region. We are grateful to the local community and employees for their support and continue to work with them to facilitate a smooth transition.” CEO Eric Rhea, Corsicana Mattress

Commissioner Sheila Matias, President of the LaPorte County Commission, stated, “To be perfectly candid, this has been very disappointing and unexpected news indeed. That being said, we had a robust meeting with Mr. Rhea, Corsicana CEO, where we quickly learned that we cannot change their corporate decision. Please be assured that no tax dollars-either local or State of Indiana funds- have been lost because Corsicana’s business incentives were all performance-based. Knowing that this is an economic decision that we cannot impact, we have turned our full attention to finding a new business for this location and assisting the displaced Corsicana workers in finding job opportunities.”

Commissioner Sheila Matias added, “On the upside, because you know I always look for that silver lining, the building owner-and the county’s economic development team-now has a fully renovated

manufacturing building to market with 180,000 SF of great space. We are on it already. Also, I'm happy to share that many local manufacturing employers have stepped forward to help in a big way. My Commission office and the Office of Community and Economic Development has been swamped with emails and calls from local businesses; we are getting information about new job opportunities into the hands of these soon- to-be- unemployed workers. Our focus is on giving them leads about open positions at local companies who pay a family wage with benefits.”

Since becoming aware of this impending factory closure, the LaPorte County Office of Community and Economic Development has worked closely with LaPorte County Commission President Sheila Matias and LaPorte County Council President Randy Novak to create a Rapid Response Task Team of staff to coordinate our local response with critical focus on those citizens who will be impacted by this business decision. Within 24 hours, the LaPorte County Commissioners and the LaPorte County Office of Community and Economic Development facilitated a virtual meeting with the Corsicana’s CEO to ask questions in order to clearly understand the company’s status. Once we learned that the situation was purely industry economics and not a situation that we could change, the task team immediately began communicating with local advanced manufacturers which have been previously featured in the LaPorte County WORKS! program. It is gratifying that many businesses throughout LaPorte County have stepped up to offer employment opportunities to the dislocated workers. In addition, the office has been in contact with WorkOne to assure that the dislocated workers are receiving necessary services such as unemployment registration and job placement.

“While it is very unfortunate news, Corsicana and the real estate ownership firm have invested significant resources into rehabilitating this once vacant industrial building-it is now a first-class manufacturing facility. We are very confident, based on the interest already shown since the announcement, that a great manufacturer will quickly reoccupy the space,” stated Randy Novak, LaPorte County Council President.

“Just 24 months ago, this 180,000 sq foot facility was dilapidated and really uninhabitable. The good news is that it is now move-in-ready with all new building infrastructure. While this closure announcement is difficult, we have been able to quickly pivot and are ready to present this facility to our long list of manufacturing prospects. I am confident that the future is bright for manufacturing in LaPorte County. Stay tuned!” stated Tony Rodriguez, EDFP., Director, Office of Community and Economic Development.