ArcelorMittal Says Layoffs Loom

WEIRTON, W.Va. (AP) - Steel giant ArcelorMittal said Tuesday it will cut an unspecified number of jobs next year and stick with plans to use 70 percent of its capacity in the current quarter.

The company plans to cut jobs through attrition and "optimization of production," spokesman Bill Steers said in an e-mail.

The Luxembourg-based steelmaker hasn't decided about production beyond this year, he said.

The Wall Street Journal reported this week that ArcelorMittal would use 70 percent of capacity for four more years and planned about 10,000 job cuts, citing unidentified sources.

But Dave McCall, District 1 director for the Pittsburgh-based United Steelworkers and chairman of the bargaining committee with ArcelorMittal, said the union has received no layoff notices from the company. Nor does it expect "any kind of mass layoff" with the strong U.S. market, he said.

"Ours is the strongest steel market in the world. Even at the height of the recession, we were consuming 70 million tons of steel per year," McCall said. "In 2010, we expect demand to be 90-100 million tons. That's 100 percent of what it was in 2007."

ArcelorMittal is also restarting its bar mill in Indiana Harbor, McCall said, "and they're going to need to either recall or hire 150-200 employees for that."

The USW represents about 14,000 ArcelorMittal employees in the United States, including about 1,000 at the mill in Weirton.

Local 2911 President Mark Glyptis said that while the company has cut a dozen management jobs in West Virginia, it hasn't discussed laying off rank-and-file employees.

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