

Ingalls Cuts May Be Hint Of Future In Military Spending



BY [EVELINA BURNETT](#) | PUBLISHED 06 SEP 2013 06:00AM | [0 COMMENTS](#)



HUNTINGTON INGALLS' GULFPORT COMPOSITE FACILITY

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More than 300 jobs will be lost on the Mississippi Gulf Coast when Huntington Ingalls closes its Gulfport composite facility next year. As MPB's Evelina Burnett reports, this may be a taste of what's to come as defense cuts hit Mississippi's job market.

Ingalls says 315 employees at the Gulfport composite facility will be laid off. Another 308 will be transferred or moved back to its Pascagoula shipyard. Harrison County Development Commission executive director Bill Hessell says he thinks the laid-off workers will be able to find other jobs in shipbuilding on the Gulf Coast.

Ingalls says it's closing the composite facility in part because the Navy recently decided to switch to less-expensive steel for one ship. Hessell says he thinks that, for the Navy, it was purely a financial decision, as it needs to save money in light of budget cuts.

These job cuts could be a hint of what's to come as the U.S. military continues to tighten its budget. But Tulio Sulbaran, director of the University of Southern Mississippi's Center for Logistics, Trade and Transportation, predicts the biggest impact will be if there are reductions in active duty personnel, and thousands of service men and women will enter the civilian workforce. Sulbaran says the U.S., including its universities, will then need to look for ways to provide job training and other education so that they can make the transition successfully.

Images



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