

WisDems: Mayor Nickels, Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry CEO, and USW Local 125 Vice President Discuss Trade War's Impact on Local Economy, Tour Aluminum Factory

Posted on Monday, Oct 14, 2019

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(MANITOWOC, WI) — As Donald Trump continues his erratic trade policies and hardworking Wisconsinites face uncertainty in the market, Manitowoc Mayor Justin Nickels toured one of the Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry's (WAF) plants and met with CEO Sachin Shivaram, as well as USW Local 125 Vice President Marcos Alfaro, to discuss the impact of the current trade climate on the local economy. The factories produce aluminum pieces primarily for gas and oil, farming, and automotive equipment. The companies that have bought WAF's specialty pieces for their equipment are now selling less due to the tariffs; that in turn is reducing their consumption of WAF products.

Manitowoc Mayor Justin Nickels: *A lot of our businesses in Manitowoc are supplying to Caterpillar, John Deere, GM — so its their products that have seen the effects of the trade war...There's quite a few companies in town where the tariffs are hurting them directly because our trade partner is China...**When businesses are talking about expanding or growing, if who they're selling to is having problems with tariffs they may think twice about expanding in Manitowoc — that's probably the largest issue.***

Aluminum Plant CEO Sachin Shivaram: *"The challenge today is things have*

*changed so dramatically in the last year...Going back to 2016, 2017, the economy was great, things were booming, we expanded, we invested more than we ever invested to expand our capacity. Since the beginning of the year, things have been slowing down...**We ended up laying off about 8% of our workforce...we never thought we'd be in that position...**On trade policy, many of my colleagues who run other businesses feel similar to how we feel, which is that there doesn't seem to be a kind of endgame or strategy with regards to what is happening with China. **I know that we want to make more stuff here, we want to employ more people... our fortunes have really changed in the last year because of whatever is happening on trade policy from Washington DC.***

USW Local 125 Vice-President Marcos Alfaro: "When you affect the American people — the working everyday people — then the whole nation is going to struggle...The fact is that were in the second month of layoffs. You know so when you talk about the economy and how great it's been, but we're not talking about the effects of the tariffs...the fact is we got guys who are on layoff...The people on the ground, everyday people — 'who's next' — that's what the guys are wondering...My message to them [people in office] is to do what they were elected to do which is represent the people.**"**

The negative impact from the trade war has had a ripple effect on the local economy. With farmers and small and medium businesses spending less and companies unable to fully fund their workforce, money that would otherwise be flowing through local communities is disappearing.

****The Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry employs roughly 450 people who's workforce is comprised of USW Locals 125 and 301, as well as the International Association of Machinists Local 516.****