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## Lufkin Industries adding jobs

*By jfenley*

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Lufkin Industries plans to add 60 to 70 new jobs in its Oilfield Division as soon as possible, Vice President Paul Perez announced Wednesday.

Since January, the international company, which is headquartered in Lufkin, has recalled, rehired and hired 250 employees, according to Perez.

From entry-level positions to skilled craftsmen, Lufkin Industries hopes to increase their labor force. A third shift will be added at the Oilfield Division due to an increase in product demand, and Perez said their recall hires have been exhausted. Perez said some employees work 12-hour shifts and 7-day weeks just to keep up.

“Our guys work a lot of overtime and that’s why we’ve decided to expand our workforce,” Perez said. “Our Oilfield Division has experienced the greatest growth, which then trickles into the foundry.”

Perez called upon the city’s economic development department and director Jim Wehmeier in a meeting on

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Wednesday to help spread the word.

“We can help develop a recruitment strategy,” Wehmeier said. “Any rural community is going to have challenges in getting skilled professionals here. But when we get them in here, they can’t imagine leaving Lufkin. We will do a better job if we are collectively telling people about these jobs. We can combine efforts and resources. We are all in to help build the talent pool in Lufkin.”

Because of the increase in labor, current employees will have the chance at internal promotions and shift premiums.

Additional workforce for Lufkin Industries will help the local economy.

“Our rough rule-of-thumb is that every job is worth about \$40,000,” Perez said. “By adding 250 people so far and 60 to 70 people in the future, that makes a significant impact in this community. Those people are living here, shopping here and buying their groceries here.”

Following a large round of layoffs in 2009, Lufkin Industries executives have continued to grow their business, both locally and abroad.

“We have a secret and we’ve got to let everybody in on it,” Perez said. “We want to continue to grow here in this community. Needing to add this many people is a great dilemma to have.”

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Lufkin Industries also announced Wednesday that its board of directors has declared a third quarter cash dividend of \$0.125 per share on its common stock. The dividend will be paid on Sept. 10 to shareholders of record on Sept. 1.

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