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Wednesday, January 26, 2005

## Kmart to close Canton distribution facility

Elimination of 325 jobs at its sole hub in Michigan by April is latest in series of cuts.

By Tenisha Mercer / The Detroit News

Kmart Holding Corp. on Tuesday said it will close its only distribution hub in the state in April, eliminating 325 jobs at the company's Canton Township facility.

The closing of the Canton distribution center on Haggerty and Joy roads marks the latest in a series of job cuts at the Troy-based retailer. In August, the discounter cut 220 jobs, about 10 percent of its 2,200 employees at its headquarters in Troy. Kmart has eliminated 57,000 jobs since it filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in 2002. It emerged from bankruptcy in 2003.

Kmart officials said the retailer needed to better align its distribution centers with its current stores, when The Detroit News reported earlier this month that the hub may close. Kmart shut 600 stores during its bankruptcy. It now has close to 1,500 stores.

Analysts say the job cuts are the first of many changes expected as Kmart completes its \$11 billion merger with Sears, Roebuck & Co. Pending an anti-trust review, the merger is expected to become final in March. The new retail company, Sears Holdings Corp., will be based in Hoffman Estates, Ill., but company officials say they plan to maintain significant operations in Michigan.

**"When you have two retailers merging, you are going to have duplications," said Farmington Hills turnaround consultant Kenneth Dalto.**

Workers at the Canton Township distribution site are represented by the United Auto Workers Local 174. UAW officials could not be reached for comment.

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