

Compaq terminates employee positions at Houston headquarters

HOUSTON (AP) — Compaq Computer Corp. is closing six plants overseas and eliminating 5,000 jobs, 600 of them at the former Digital Equipment Corp. facility in Marlboro, Mass.

In Monday's announcement, Compaq said it is eliminating 1,000 jobs at its headquarters in Houston.

The moves are part of a previously announced cost-cutting drive following Compaq's acquisition of Digital and Tandem Computers.

Most of those being laid off at Marlboro are administrative workers. The facility there was headquarters for Digital's manufacturing operations.

Most Digital workers in Massachusetts are administrative or in engineering, sales and customer service.

The announcement provided the first de-

tails of the cuts, which will total 17,000 jobs, or about 20 percent of the companies' 85,500 total payroll. Most of the cuts will come at Digital, which had 54,000 employees when it was acquired by Compaq earlier this month.

"This is not new," Compaq spokesman Alan Hodel said. "It's a detail under the bigger picture."

Two plants will be closed in Scotland and one each will be shuttered in Brazil, China, Singapore and Taiwan. Compaq also is closing operations in Australia, Brazil and Japan that handle final assembly of computers for shipment to customers.

Monday's announcement describes layoffs first announced June 12 after Digital shareholders approved Compaq's \$9 billion purchase of the Maynard, Mass.-based computer maker, ending Digital's 42 years of independence and making Compaq the

world's second-largest computer maker behind IBM.

The Digital deal followed Compaq's 1997 purchase of Cupertino, Calif.-based Tandem Computers, a maker of big business computers, for \$3 billion.

"Integrating all Compaq manufacturing operations into a single, cohesive organization is essential as we build the future Compaq," Eckhard Pfeiffer, president and chief executive officer, said.

The goal of the manufacturing consolidations is to deliver 95 percent of all products anywhere in the world in five days or less, the computer maker said.

Compaq said some Houston assembly lines would be closed while warehousing and logistics are realigned to consolidate regional distribution and direct-ship orders from the factory to retailers and resellers.

Bacteria taints Galveston Bay oysters; number of people affected increases

GALVESTON (AP) — The number of people sickened by bad Galveston Bay oysters has risen to at least 128, more than double from late last week, state health officials said yesterday.

David Estlack, of the Texas Department of Health's Seafood Safety Division, said none of the illnesses so far has been serious. At least 18 of the cases involve raw oyster dinners in Florida restaurants.

The most recent count was up 21 from Monday.

Health officials last week issued bulletins that the oysters were tainted by a bacterium called *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*.

Wholesalers are tracking shipments to restaurants around Texas and to Louisiana, Florida, Colorado, New Mexico and California and warning them not to serve the shellfish raw. The bacterium is killed by thorough cooking.

So far, the outbreak is the second-largest of its kind in the nation's history. Last year, 208 people in the Pacific Northwest were sickened by oysters tainted with the bacterium. One person died.

Symptoms from the ailment

range from diarrhea and fever.

It's most dangerous with liver problems, disorders, diabetes, stomach problems or users of steroids, as well as arthritis.

Oysters from seven areas where the oysters have been harvested recently are believed to have caused illnesses in this month, officials said.

The bacterium's death is attributed to warm, salty water around oysters in Galveston Bay.

Officials said they hope fusion of fresh water over the weekend's heavy storm help prevent more oysters from becoming contaminated.

"We hope it's enough to drop the water temperature and eliminate the bacterium," said David Hillman, a Galveston oyster shipper.

Harvesting in the controlled oyster beds has not until more is learned about contamination.

If you have additional questions call the FDA Seafood line, (1-800) FDA-4010.

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