

An Open Letter to Wal-Mart from the Citizens and Friends of Marion County, South Carolina

As Wal-Mart has emerged as the world's largest distributor, you have benefited greatly from an increasing presence in communities throughout America. However, this has created significant problems for the company.

We think we have a solution.

Recently, you have invested millions defending yourself against opposition to expanding your existing stores and building new ones – like the one you are seeking to open just down the road in Florence, S.C. Today, we are asking you to do something better and more productive with that money:

Become our "partner in prosperity" and help us get our jobs back.

In 2002, a knitwear plant in Mullins, S.C., closed its doors for good. At the time, it was one of the 20 largest employers in the county and an important economic contributor in an area where unemployment approached 20 percent. In all, about 600 people were put out of work.

We didn't lose these jobs because we were unproductive or inefficient. We lost them because of the growing trend toward producing cheaper goods overseas. Our offer provides you a unique opportunity to reverse that trend – in a small way – and help bring American jobs back to America.

This community can reopen the plant and manufacture T-shirts under a new name – ProsperITEES™ – provided that Wal-Mart agrees to buy the goods that are produced there, at a fair price.

We understand that you can still get shirts cheaper offshore. But the output of this plant would be small compared to your total purchases. You could still sell our shirts at the same cost you sell shirts made in China and not feel the slightest pinch.

And even if you had to charge a little extra, does it really matter? Our products would be high-quality and made in the U.S.A. We think most Americans would agree that paying a little extra for a ProsperITEE™ is worth it.

Business issues aside, you would be helping to immediately create about 350 jobs. You would be putting some of the poorest people in our state and nation back to work. And you would be helping a lot of good folks in Mullins to feed their families.

We think most Americans would agree that paying a little extra for that would really be worth it.

Doesn't it make more sense, and do more good, to invest in something that makes friends – something that makes a real difference in ways that create a better life for those who need it most?

We think it does. That's why we're asking for your help. It is a chance to show America that Wal-Mart truly does understand the value of being a good neighbor.

We would like to come to Bentonville to discuss this offer further. Please let us know the time and date that work best for you.

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