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Metropolitan Desk; B

THE REGION; Springsteen Asks 3M to Keep Plant

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FREEHOLD, N.J., Dec.4 -- The rock singer Bruce Springsteen and the country singer Willie Nelson asked executives of the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company yesterday to reconsider a decision to shut down a plant in Mr. Springsteen's hometown that employs more than 350 people.

"We know these decisions are always difficult to make," the singers said in ads placed in The New York Times and three other newspapers, "but we believe that people of good-will should be able to sit down and come up with a humane program that will keep those jobs and those workers in Freehold."

Officials at 3M, said they planned to start layoffs at the plant, which manufactures audio tape and videotape, on March 1 because of "intense and growing competition nationwide."

The plant is too small to modernize, said a 3M spokesman, John Lively. He said that 330 people would be laid off and that about 30 employees would be relocated to Minnesota or North Dakota.

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