

# OPEN SHOP GAZETTE

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## ***Union's tactics cost city Japanese nonunion company driven out***

"I believe that this is just the beginning of a manufacturing renaissance here in the Antelope Valley."

So said Palmdale Mayor Jim Ledford in June, celebrating the agreement the city reached with a Japanese company, Kinkisharyo International, to build a \$60 million factory on a vacant 60-acre city-owned site.

The 400,000-square-foot plant was to employ as many as 300 locals to paint and wire light-rail cars manufactured by Kinkisharyo, under an \$890 million contract with the L. A. Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

But, alas, Kinkisharyo last week backed out of its agreement with Palmdale. The Japanese company said that demands by labor unions and community activist groups made the project untenable.

"The company is disappointed," said Kinkisharyo spokesman Coby King. "They would have liked to stay in Palmdale." Instead the \$60 million factory, and its up-to-300 jobs, are headed out of the state.

The blow to Palmdale's manufacturing renaissance began this past summer when a coalition including the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local II and an outfit calling itself Antelope Valley Residents for Responsible Development presented Mayor Ledford and city officials with a 588-page document claiming that Kinkisharyo's planned factory ran afoul of state environmental laws.

L. A. County Supervisor Michael Antonovich, who also sits on the L. A. Metro Board, rightly accused the union and the community activist group of "greenmail," invoking environmental law to extract certain concessions from Kinkisharyo.

Indeed, the electric workers union insisted that the Japanese company accede to a so-called "card check agreement," in which Kinkisharyo would accept compulsory unionization of its Palmdale workers if a majority signed cards requesting union representation.

Kinkisharyo refused, understandably so, because card check is decidedly biased in favor of unionization.

IBEW II reveals the mindset of many, if not most, unions here in California. It would rather a plant not be built, and good-paying jobs not created, than let a company like Kinkisharyo International go nonunionized.

That explains why the Golden State continues to see an exodus of companies large and small to rival states where Big Labor doesn't employ such strong-arm tactics to get its way."

