Bucksport Mill downsized its workforce but did not close its doors as the Sartell Mill did after the explosion. Perhaps the hope that times would improve and they would be rehired also factored into the more optimistic outlook among Bucksport workers.

We intend to undertake further analyses to more clearly understand these attitudinal differences. Our expectation is that the local economies have a major impact. The plight of workers laid off in small towns that are dependent on single industries has been an ongoing theme in rural sociology research.\(^8\) In Minnesota we have seen communities on the Iron Range struggle with boom and bust periods in the taconite industry. Most of Minnesota’s population is concentrated in the central cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, with development running north and south from St. Cloud to Rochester. Sartell workers are within range of this urban area. Bucksport is more isolated and, like the Iron Range, offers fewer options for employment. Many younger workers are faced with moving to urban areas to find good paying jobs. Older workers may find this less acceptable. Families are separated as a spouse finds work at a distance. Finding family-sustainable employment is both a rural and an urban problem, and with the continued decline of manufacturing in the United States, is likely to be with us for a long time.

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