Hershey closes its Oakdale candy plant and moves to Mexico — Stanislaus County, 2007–08

Hershey closed its Oakdale candy plant as part of a company-wide restructuring announced in 2007, shifting production to a new facility in Monterrey, Mexico and ending more than four decades of chocolate-making in the Stanislaus County town — one of at least three food and confectionery-sector disruptions the county absorbed within about a year, alongside the Signature Fruit Co. ownership change in Modesto.

575

Employees at the Oakdale plant, per local retrospective reporting — not independently corroborated on the exact figure.

250

People Sconza Chocolates now employs at the same site, after buying it in 2008.

What happened

Hershey's Oakdale plant opened in 1965. In 2007, as part of a broader restructuring that cut about 1,500 jobs — roughly 11% of the company's total U.S. workforce — Hershey announced it would close some U.S. plants and shift production to a new facility under construction in Monterrey, Mexico. Production at Oakdale ceased in January 2008, per Hershey's own SEC filing. Oakdale's decades-old chocolate festival, tied to the plant's presence in town, was cancelled for good after the closure, ending a 30-year tradition.

Sconza Chocolates, relocating from Oakland, bought the Oakdale site in 2008 and committed to hiring former Hershey employees — some stayed on for years afterward. Sconza now employs 250 people at the plant.

Impact — what we know, and what we don't

- **Jobs:** approximately 575 at Oakdale specifically, per a 2026 Modesto Bee retrospective; the broader 1,500-job figure is company-wide, not Oakdale-specific, and the Oakdale number hasn't been independently corroborated beyond that one source.
- **Closure date:** sources split between the 2007 announcement/restructuring year and the January 2008 production-end date in Hershey's own 10-K; both are cited here rather than resolved to one.
- **What became of the site:** fully resolved — Sconza Chocolates bought it in 2008 and still operates there.

Part of a larger pattern

This is another instance of a pattern that shows up elsewhere in this project — a plant closes under its original owner, then reopens at a smaller scale under a new one — alongside **Foster Farms Turlock/Diestel Family Ranch** and the Saputo-to-Marquez Brothers building sale documented in **Kraft's Louis Rich plant** research. It also lands in the same narrow 2006–2007 window as **Seneca Foods' later purchase of Signature Fruit Co.'s Modesto operation** — meaning Stanislaus County absorbed at least three separate food-sector disruptions within about a year, years before the county's other documented clusters in 2012–14 and 2024–2026.

Sources

- The Modesto Bee, 21 Jan 2026, "What workers can expect as Del Monte Modesto shuts down" (retrospective reference). Access: paywalled — read in the print edition; the publisher's online copy sits behind a subscription.
- **CBS News (Sacramento), "Hershey factory long gone, Oakdale cancels its chocolate festival for good after 30 years."**
- **Hershey Company, Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended 31 December 2007, SEC EDGAR** (accession 0001193125-08-033182).

Full citation detail and source archive: **Data**. Back to **all case studies**.