Local hospital lays off fifty-one employees

By BEN REED and KATRINNA HUGGS

Paul Landry, administrator of Abbeville General Hospital, announced late Friday afternoon that 51 employees had been terminated by the local health care facility.

Landry pointed to a decrease in revenues “brought about by a poor economy and recent changes in federal reimbursement programs.”

He added, in a prepared news release, the reduction in force “will have no effect on the quality of care or service rendered to our patients.”

No further information was available at press time.

The decision to terminate hospital employees resulted from a hospital executive board meeting held on Sept. 30, where a consultant’s recommendations relative to hospital staffing were considered. The recommendations were based on a “productivity monitoring” survey, developed by the consultant. At the board meeting there was a hint that board members in the closed session were contemplating the layoff of many hospital employees.

In an interview on Sept. 30 with the Meridional, Landry said the survey was conducted because patient numbers have decreased significantly at Abbeville General over the past two years. The administrator cited two reasons for the decrease in patient numbers, both of which he said were universal, affecting virtually every hospital in the U.S.

“The first is the advent of advanced technology in the medical field, which has resulted in hospitals in general being able to discharge patients more quickly,” said Landry. “Second, there is less incentive now for hospitals to keep patients longer, since the federal government does not pay for medical care past a predesignated amount of time.”