

# NASA slashes Plum Brook

By DAVE RUSS

More than 600 jobs will be eliminated as the federal government curtails activities at the Lewis Research Center in Cleveland and phases out the Plum Brook facility in Erie County near Sandusky in the next year-and-a-half.

As part of a nationwide program to decrease spending on space programs, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) announced the cutbacks yesterday.

Officials had no exact figures on the number of Lorain countians affected by the surprise announcement, but many work at the two space facilities.

**THE \$70 MILLION** Plum Brook station, which employs 461, provides an annual contribution of approximately \$12 million to the Sandusky area economy.

This is made up of salaries, support contracts and procurement activities, according to Hugh Harris, NASA public information officer in Cleveland.

Only a handful of caretakers and security personnel will work at the 8,000-acre Plum Brook facility, located on Sandusky's southern border when the phase-out is completed by June 30, 1974.

The government will attempt to aid all employes affected by the cutback, Harris said. Some will receive early retirement, others transfers, and some a form of severance pay.

**AT LEWIS**, located at Brookpark and Grayton roads on Cleveland's west side, the curtailment will deal mainly with the programs involving nuclear propulsion and power programs.

The reduction of about 600 jobs at both facilities is "in addition to a planned reduction of about 90 at both plants," Harris said.

The first employes to leave Plum Brook will be about 180 who were involved with the nuclear programs.

**A NUCLEAR** reactor, which cost \$15 million, will be shut down by June 30 this year, Harris said.

"In research and technology, work on nuclear propulsion will be discontinued and work on nuclear power will be sharply curtailed."



**NASA'S Plum Brook facility in Sandusky will be closed by the end of June next year. The deactivation is part of a NASA budget cut that will eliminate or sharply curtail several long-term programs.**

NASA said.

Plum Brook has been the principal NASA installation involved with testing nuclear power.

NASA said near-term projects that will not be affected by the cutback include the Skylab experimental space station, the space shuttle, the Apollo-Sovuz test project, Viking, and the Mariner-Jupiter Saturn mission.

**AT PLUM BROOK** the nuclear reactor test facility was first used in 1961.

Also at the site is a \$4.4 million space power facility that simulates altitude conditions for tests of spacecraft and spacecraft components. It began operations last year.

A \$12 million space propulsion research facility opened in 1969 is a vacuum chamber that has the capability of handling firings of full-scale rockets.

All Plum Brook radioactive material that is moveable will be relocated, but parts of the reactor itself are immovable and will remain.

**COMPONENTS** not moved to the Cleveland facility will be placed in an equipment pool and used as needed, NASA said.

"The land is being placed in standby with the assumption operations will be resumed sometime in the future," the spokesman said.

The NASA cutbacks will trim \$200 million from the space agency's \$3.4 billion budget for fiscal 1973. Spending cuts are expected to continue through fiscal 1974.

The caretaker and security crew that will remain at Plum Brook will be accompanied by numerous deer that roam the 8,000-acre reservation.

Negotiations between NASA and the Department of the Interior are now underway to provide for their care.