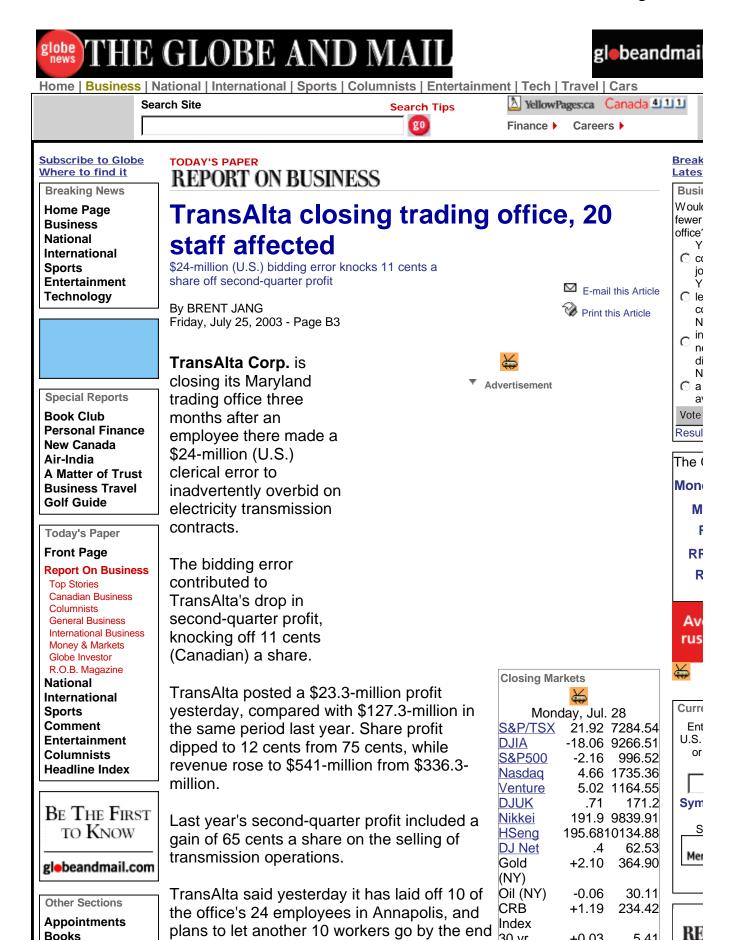
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The individual who committed the error left TransAlta in July as part of the first wave of 10 employees severed, said Thomas Rainwater, TransAlta's executive vice-president of corporate development and marketing.

The person, who was not fired, will receive a severance package like the other 19 people who have departed or soon will, Mr. Rainwater said.

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He declined to identify the person who made a cut-and-paste error on an Excel spreadsheet in the spring, saying he didn't want to further aggravate the situation.

After the Maryland branch closes within three to six months, TransAlta's trading operations will be shifted to its Calgary head office, where the remaining four U.S. employees are expected to transfer.

"I wouldn't want it to be perceived as a witch hunt," Mr. Rainwater said. "It really was more of a strategic business decision" that TransAlta considered months before the jolting blunder. "The last thing we want to do is try to victimize somebody."

U.S. citizens account for the bulk of the office's payroll in Annapolis, where TransAlta leases space.

On June 3, TransAlta disclosed that human error led to the electronic filing of bids at the end of April that misaligned rows of data on the spreadsheet. High bids were made for low demand routes, so the company ended up holding the bag for May transmission contracts it didn't need.

"Clearly, the employee who did it is quite distraught over it. It was a simple error, though, but the closing of the office has nothing to do with that, and that employee was not terminated because of that error," said Steve Snyder, TransAlta's president and chief executive officer. "There were certainly discussions held with the employee, but they are unrelated events."

TransAlta is seeking to close the Maryland trading operations in an orderly fashion and move those functions to Calgary as a cost-cutting measure and to improve efficiency, Mr. Snyder said.

Mr. Snyder said the latest quarter was strong from the standpoint of plant operating performance, higher spot prices for electricity and

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פומות סףסומוווא פטווסווומווסס, ווואווסו סףסג פווססט וטו טוסטנווטוג, מוומ new power plants. In other corporate highlights, TransAlta recently sold its Calgary headquarters to Forum Leasehold Partners Inc. for \$66-million, and has entered into a 20-year lease for the property. TransAlta also said yesterday that it began commercial operation of a wind-turbine joint venture in southern Alberta last month. The utility oversees nearly \$9-billion in assets, including coal-fired electricity plants in Alberta. Print this Article Site Search Subscribe to The Globe and Mail Sign up for our daily e-mail News Update **Back to the Search Results** glebeinvestor.com glebetechnology.com workopolis At GTVca 7577.ca

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