

## Editorial: Anderson area needs a varied economy

November 11, 2009 08:46 pm

— Four economists looked into their crystal balls Tuesday at Anderson Country Club during the annual economic forecast and came up with this projection: Things will get better. Slowly, perhaps not steadily. Dagny Faulk of Ball State's Center for Business and Economic Research talked specifically about the economy in east central Indiana. She noted that the area's past reliance on the automotive industry is hindering its recovery from the deepest part of the recession.

It was another way of saying what folks living in this community have heard for more than a decade: The local economy must be diversified. When a region is subject to the whims of a particular industry, its peaks are high and its valleys low. Wouldn't it be nice to experience a steady climb with the occasional dip in the road?

To use a distinctly Hoosier expression: You shouldn't put all your eggs in one basket.

Yet the Madison County area should seek to capitalize on its past, and is doing just that at the Flagship Enterprise Center off Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Interstate 69. New businesses, many of which capitalize on our rich base of automotive industry and electronics knowledge, are springing up, some holding the promise of thousands of jobs.

What we really need, though, is more businesses — and not just retail — that provide 10, 20, 50, 100 jobs. A hundred such businesses, spread across economic sectors, is preferable to a handful that employ the same combined number of people. One of the latter goes under, and the community takes a big hit. One of the former folds, and the suffering is limited.

Yes, Anderson and the surrounding area have been hit hard by the one-two punch of the first auto industry bailout (to Mexico) and the recent recession. But remember what makes a fighter tough — the experience of taking a punch or two and realizing you need a variety of tactics (some aggressive, some thoughtful) to fight back.

That's the spirit that east central Indiana must adopt.

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