

## **A Bright Spot For Local Jobs**

Opinion Column

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Dane County businesses and workers are producing enviable results this year.

Nearly two-thirds of 528 Dane County companies polled in a recent survey expect similar or higher profits this year, compared to last year. Even better, many of those companies expect profits to increase next year. And more Dane County businesses plan in 2008 to spend on long-term investments, such as buildings and equipment.

The upbeat results come from the 2007 First Business Economic Survey of Dane County released this month. The UW-Madison School of Business and First Business Bank sponsor the annual assessment.

The growth and profitability of Dane County businesses is great news for the region. It also is a welcome and exciting break from gloomy predictions for the national economy.

Successful companies in the Dane County region create good-paying jobs, provide tax revenue for public services and contribute to an exceptional quality of life.

This is especially true of the small but growing technology sector. Four out of five Dane County tech companies expect higher profits in 2007. And nine out of 10 expect to add employees and increase wages in 2008, according to the survey.

In retail, more than half of local shops enjoyed higher revenues this year. In manufacturing, over half expect higher profits this year, and nearly two-thirds hope to improve in 2008.

Wages are steady overall, and unemployment is low.

But south-central Wisconsin shouldn't take this bright economic news for granted. Efforts to encourage the growth of high-paying jobs across the Capital Region need constant attention and cooperation.

Helping lead the way is Thrive, an economic development organization that's been set up to boost the eight-county area surrounding Madison. Thrive is wisely concentrating on nurturing existing companies - especially those involved in biotechnology, agriculture and health care.

Not all signs point to a bright economic future for the region in 2008. Yet the recent results from the First Business Economic Survey of Dane County suggest our region is ahead of the game.

Dane County businesses are doing well and plan to do better, despite some worry about a national slowdown.

That's something to cheer and nurture as a new and optimistic year begins. \\ On the Web

To view the 2007 First Business Economic Survey of Dane County, go to:  
[www.firstbusinesseconomicssurvey.com](http://www.firstbusinesseconomicssurvey.com).