



THE

Lebanon Reporter

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2009

WWW.REPORTER.NET

30¢

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Expert sees job boom potential

BY NICK MCLAIN
For The Lebanon Reporter

ZIONSVILLE - Boone County is in a position into a growing market for well-paying manufacturing jobs, a prominent state economist said Thursday.

Michael Hicks, Director of the Center of Business and Economic Research at Ball State University, presented the findings of a cluster analysis study it did for the Boone County Economic Development Corporation on Thursday, Nov. 19 at Zionsville Town Hall.

"When you think of manufacturing, you think it's dying, but it's really not, it's growing," Hicks said.

Eight sectors Hicks said were performing well now, and that will provide continued potential for Boone County, are:

- Pharmaceutical/medical manufacturing
- Motor vehicle related manufacturing;
- Engine equipment manufacturing;

- Transportation and warehousing;
- Aircraft engine and engine parts manufacturing;

- Electronic computer manufacturing;
- Agricultural chemical manufacturing and
- Surgical/medical instrument manufacturing.

Those key sectors were selected based on volume of sales, type and size of employment and factors relating to industry growth.

"These are things that we can efficiently market and grow here in Boone County," Boone EDC Executive Director Dax Norton said.

Boone County already has one economic development edge, Hicks said:

"Having a community where people want to live is half the battle, and you have that here," he said.

Boone EDC worked with Hicks and his team since January in talking with political and industrial leaders, among others, to get a

sense of the area's strengths.

The study covered counties along the Interstate 65 corridor from Indianapolis to Lafayette.

"We want to be proactive in attracting emerging industries and make sure we're on the cutting edge," Norton said. "Without this kind of analysis, we're kind of shooting in the dark."

"These (manufacturing) jobs, they are smaller, they are innovative and they pay premium wages."

The PowerPoint that Hicks presented can be found on the Boone EDC's Web site at www.booneedc.org/services.

PHOTO BY NICK MCLAIN

Michael Hicks, Director of the Center for Business and Economic Research at Ball State University, presents the findings of the cluster analysis study at a public forum hosted by the Boone County EDC Thursday.

