

# Local economy on the upswing

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*Marshfield News Herald*

February 16, 2007

The economy in Marshfield and Central Wisconsin appears to be bouncing, said Randy Cray, director of the Central Wisconsin Economic Research Bureau.

He spoke to the Sunrise Rotary Thursday morning about economic indicators from the fourth quarter of 2006.

"Relative to a lot of Central Wisconsin, Marshfield is well-positioned," he said, referring to the aging population of Wisconsin and Marshfield's medical facilities.

A survey of business owners shows more confidence in the expected national and local economic conditions – a larger sign of confidence from retailers since September 2006.

Rotary member Diane Meyer Van Note asked about the types of jobs posted in help-wanted ads. Cray reported the number of ads had increased in Marshfield since a year ago.

"Some sectors, some would associate with low-paying jobs," Cray said. "A lot of people erroneously think the service sector indicates low-paying jobs."

The service sector includes medical jobs and legal positions, which are higher paying.

"We would probably like to see an improvement in the quality of jobs," Cray said.

Another question from Phil Phillips asked about the central Wisconsin employment numbers growing at a higher rate than Wood County. Cray said the Granite Peak and Stevens Point areas both have a high number of hotels being built, which helps add to the employment figures.

One area of concern is the manufacturing industry, which echoes the national trend of declining employment. According to the report, employment figures in Central Wisconsin dropped from 29,500 to 28,800 between December 2005 and December 2006.