

# Experts: Loss of factory jobs not all bad

## State politicians, economists see cities like Connersville rebounding because of other businesses

By TOM MURPHY  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### CONNERSVILLE

Connersville bears the label "Positively! Connersville" beam happy thoughts to drivers passing through downtown, while storefront signs in this eastern Indiana city remind pedestrians "the future is in our hands."

That wave of optimism, however, hasn't washed over the entire community, which is reeling from the news earlier this month that its largest employer, Visteon Corp., plans to shutter its enormous factory.

The September shutdown will idle 890 employees. One of them, Gary Mays, has no idea what he'll do when his 20-year run at the factory ends.

"This town is down to nothing," Mays, 44, said as he finished lunch at Maggie's Diner before the start of a recent shift. "You're looking at a ghost town for business."

Connersville joined a growing list of Indiana communities hit recently by a string of auto parts factory closings.

All told, four major Indiana auto parts plants have either closed or announced closings since December, moves that will cut more than 4,000 jobs statewide.

The latest entry, Muncie, learned Thursday that Auburn Hills, Mich.-based BorgWarner will close its factory there by 2009, idling 780 workers. But



The Visteon plant in Connersville once employed more than 3,500 workers and was considered the city's primary employer. It is scheduled to close in

September. The shutdown will idle 890 employees, adding the city to a growing list of Indiana communities hit by a string of auto parts factory closings.

economists and politicians say the news isn't as bleak as it might appear.

Even leaders in Connersville, where Visteon once employed more than 3,500 people, see signs of hope. For starters, manufacturing is far from dead in the state, said Patrick Barkey, director of economic and policy studies at Ball State University. Since 2004, the state's manufacturing job totals have stayed within a narrow range, centered on 570,000. Visteon had trimmed jobs for years at its Connersville

factory, which makes climate-control products such as heating and air conditioning systems.

The closing surprised few in this city of nearly 16,000 people. Still, it promises to deliver a deep blow to the area after it arrives. The factory contributes about \$4 million in tax revenue, or about 10 percent of the entire amount collected in Fayette County, Connersville Mayor Max Ellison said.

At one time, it also contributed about a quarter of the city's tax revenue. "I told a couple people

the other day I felt like we were sleeping under the sword of Damocles," Ellison said.

Now that the sword has fallen, the area probably won't attract another employer of Visteon's size. But it can rebound by recruiting smaller businesses that might employ 50 or 60 people, said Pete Bell, a business owner and chairman of the local economic development group.

He sees many selling points, starting with a highly skilled work force. "Tool and die makers, machin-

ists and those sorts of folks just abound in this region," Bell said.

He also touts the community's school system, its proximity to big cities (Indianapolis, Cincinnati and Dayton, Ohio, are all about an hour away), and Connersville's quality of life.

Bell said business leaders have started spreading the word about his city by literally knocking on doors. Several months ago, they began showing up unannounced at companies in other regions and states, looking for anyone in need of a good work force.

### FADING FACTORIES

The scene: Connersville stands to lose nearly 900 workers when Visteon Corp. closes its plant in September.

**Business opportunity:** Civic leaders are knocking on doors at plants in neighboring states, touting Connersville and its trained veteran work force.

**What's next:** An agricultural energy park is planned west of Connersville, and its anchor tenant, an ethanol plant, will start construction this spring. The park could employ as many as 1,000 people once it is fully developed.

Officials also have talked to vendors who want to build sites near the new factory Honda Motor Corp. is building about 30 miles southwest of Connersville in Greensburg. And they're encouraged by an agricultural energy park planned for west of the city.

Ellison said the anchor tenant, an ethanol plant, will start construction this spring, and the park could employ as many as 1,000 people once it is fully developed.

People in every community need hope, said Fuzzy Lake, a Connersville business owner and pastor.

The president of the Fayette County Ministerial Association said the group has had as many as 40 people attend regular prayer vigils for the community. He believes that makes a difference.

"I've been here 30 years, and I've seen them go through a lot of stuff," he said. "I've always seen the community bounce back."

## BRIEFS NEWS

### Cartoon Network chief quits after marketing stunt

The head of the Cartoon Network resigned Friday following a marketing stunt that caused a terrorism scare in Boston and led police to shut down bridges and send in the bomb squad.

"It's my hope that my decision allows us to put this chapter behind us and get back to our mission of delivering unrivaled original animated entertainment for consumers of all ages," said Samples, who was the network's general manager and executive vice president.

He said he regretted what had happened and felt "compelled to step down, effective immediately, in recognition of the gravity of the situation that occurred."

Dozens of blinking electronic devices showing a crude cartoon character had been planted in 10 cities as part of a guerrilla marketing campaign to promote the cartoon "Aqua Teen Hunger Force," but when Boston authorities got a series of calls about the devices on Jan. 31, they feared the circuit boards with wires could be explosives.

Cartoon Network's corporate parent acknowledged a few hours into the scare that the boards were harmless and part of a marketing move.

On Monday, Turner Broadcasting and an advertising agency involved agreed to pay \$2 million in compensation for the emergency response the devices had

spurred in Boston. The Cartoon Network is a division of Atlanta-based Turner Broadcasting.

The agreement between Turner, Interference Inc. and several state and local agencies resolves any potential civil or criminal claims against the two companies.

### Credit card info may have been stolen from Web site

Someone may have accessed credit card information of about 5,600 people and businesses from the state government's Web site, the Indiana Office of Technology said Friday.

The state has sent letters to those affected explaining what happened and that the problems have since been fixed.

The state is asking those who receive a letter to review their credit card statements and report any questionable activity to credit companies.

The letter said the state has implemented the highest levels of security.

"Despite these efforts, the State's Web site recently experienced a security breach during which some credit card numbers were obtained without authorization," the letter said.

Because of technical errors, those numbers were not encrypted, so someone may have viewed the unscrambled numbers.

For more information, those affected can call the state's security hotline at 888-438-8397.

**B. Expressive Salon & Day Spa**

**TEEN EXTRAVAGANZA**

February 11, 2007  
12:00 pm - 6:00 pm  
Choose 3 select salon & spa services for \$90.00

Giant pizzas, snacks & drinks!

Highlights • Haircut • Makeup • Massage • Manicure Color • Ear Piercing • Facial Pedicure • Waxing

Call or come in to reserve your spot!

**240 US 31 Whiteland • 317.535.8248**

**Got a news tip?**

The Daily Journal's best story ideas come from you, our readers.

Call our news tip phone line at 736-2712 or send an e-mail to [newstips@thejournalnet.com](mailto:newstips@thejournalnet.com).

**Professional Acupuncture Services**

- Muscle/Joint Pain/Arthritis
- Addictions
- Women's Health
- Fibromyalgia
- Chronic Pain
- Stress
- Headaches/Migraine
- Smoking
- Low Back Pain
- Anxiety/Depression
- Allergies/Asthma
- Wellness

And much more . . .

**SERVICES OFFERED**

- Acupuncture
- Electroacupuncture
- Cupping
- Gua Sha
- NADA style ear acupuncture for addictions

All provided by an NCCAOM Certified Acupuncturist in a comfortable and relaxing atmosphere.

**Winter Special** Mention this ad and receive **\$20** off initial visit!!! Expires 3/1/07

Southside Acupuncture & Wellness Center  
7210 Madison Avenue, Suite F  
Indianapolis, IN 46227  
**Tel: (317) 791-1171**

It is the sweet simple things of life which make your love grow stronger

Let us indulge your loved ones with salon and spa services surrounded in chocolate.

Facials, body massages, and pedicures all with the essence of chocolate!

Call to reserve an appointment for the week of Feb. 12-17th

**SpotLight Elite Salon & Day Spa**

520 North State Road 135, Suite D  
Greenwood, Indiana 46142  
(Corner of Fairview and St. Rd 135)

317.887.9696

Service Hours:  
Mon.-Thu 9:00am - 8:00pm  
Fri 9:00am - 5:00pm  
Sat 9:00am - 3:00pm

Gift Cards Available

**THE SATURN PROMISE.**

THERE IS STILL A PLACE WHERE "AFFORDABLE" AND "WELL EQUIPPED" CO-EXIST!

Come In and See the New VUE Hybrid Go Green Without Going Broke! From \$22,995 - well equipped!

**2007 VUE**  
Automatic • Full Power • CD Player • OnStar  
27 MPG • 5 Star Safety and Much More!

Starting at **\$18,675**

Or lease for **\$263/mo.\***

Or choose finance rates as low as **3.9%**

**CHECK OUT THE NEW 5 YEAR OR 100K WARRANTY!**

**GO 2007 ION.2**

Air Conditioning • CD Player • OnStar  
Power Door Locks • 35 MPG  
5 Star Safety and a 5 year / 100k warranty!

Starting at **\$13,560**

Or lease for **\$165/mo.\***

Or choose finance rates as low as **1.9%**

**GO 2007 AURA XE**

European Inspired Ride & Handling  
Refined Interior • V6 • OnStar • 30 MPG  
5 Star Safety • 17" Wheels  
and a 5 year / 100k warranty!

Starting at **\$20,595**

Or lease for **\$251/mo.\***

Or choose finance rates as low as **4.9%**

**GO 2007 OUTLOOK XE**

Best Fuel Economy of ANY 8 Passenger SUV!  
More Cargo & Passenger Space  
Luxurious & Refined • OnStar • V6 • SIX Airbags  
ABS • Stabilitrak Standard!

Starting at **\$27,990**

Or lease for **\$329/mo.\***

Or choose finance rates as low as **4.9%**

**Saturn owners ask us about your special savings!**

**Saturn of Indianapolis**  
5333 Pike Plaza Road (next to Meijer) • Indianapolis  
317.293.1551 or TOLL FREE 1.800.469.5672  
Visit us on the web at: [www.saturnofindianapolis.com](http://www.saturnofindianapolis.com)

\*Based on approved credit. Pictures are for representation purposes only. ION.2 5 speed, VUE FWD-4 auto, & AURA XE lease examples are 39 months allowing 39,000 miles with \$1,995 cash down plus first month's payment due at signing. TTL not included. Other lease terms are available. Must take delivery by February 28, 2007. See Retailer for details.