

AROUND THE COUNTY

By Noel LaBine, Wright County Economic Development Partnership

Our next scheduled monthly noon luncheon seminar will feature Wells Fargo national economist, Eugenio Aleman, at Monticello on October 7th.

August was a month with more positive news about the economy. Like the rains that came to end the drought in Wright County and lifted up the leaves of the crops, the good news has lifted up the spirits of the citizens.

One of the measures that bode well for future economic growth is the increase in the business conditions index. In August, this index went from 45.2 to 58. A number above 50 indicates growth among manufacturers. "Nationally, the manufacturing sector also grew in August. The nation's manufacturing index number was 52.9 in August, up from 48.9, according to the Institute for Supply Management." Minnesota has "achieved the highest Midwest survey rating in August," and has "blasted past some states," according to Ernie Goss, a Creighton economist who administers the survey in this nine-state region. This is a strong sign that the economy is finally beginning to recover. (Star Tribune, September 2, 2009; pages D1& D5).

"On the national level, Norbert Ore, chairman of the Institute for Supply Management's survey committee, said the decline in the manufacturing output has ended after a year and a half. He noted that 11 out of 18 manufacturing industries, such as apparel, appliances and electronic products, reported growth from July to August. Ore said, 'growth appears sustainable in the short term, as inventories have been reduced and suppliers will have to restock products to meet demand.'" (Star Tribune, September 2, 2009; p. D5).

Other signs include the slowing down of new unemployment numbers, and Minnesota has lower unemployment numbers than the rest of the nation. While the national unemployment is 9.7%, Minnesota's unemployment is 8.3%. For more information about the regional economy, be sure to read the summary of Professor King Banaian's presentation in August, which is included in the Wright County Economic Development Partnership newsletter.

The partnership has been busy visiting members of the staff and elected officials in the cities in Wright County. This effort is to assess what we should be doing to adjust our strategies to meet the changing conditions. While listening to the concerns of city staff and elected officials around the county, we have become admirers of their tenacity and resourcefulness during these fiscal challenging times. While some cities have larger fiscal challenges than others, all are keeping their vision on the future of this promising county.