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## Signs pointing upward for job growth in area

Steve Sink

Maybe the glass really is half full.

For years, Rochesterians have been distressed as Kodak, Xerox and Bausch & Lomb — the historic Big Three of local business — reduced employment, in Kodak's case by tens of thousands of jobs.

Last weekend's building implosions at Kodak Park thunderously underscored the notion that the Rochester economy of the 20th century is no more.

For the past few months, however, business leaders and analysts have been noticing something that defies conventional wisdom: The region actually is adding more jobs than it's losing. And more growth appears likely.

Matt Hurlbutt is among the keenest observers of what's going on. As managing director of Finger Lakes Wired, Hurlbutt leads a federally funded program aimed at helping the nine-county region through an economic transformation.

"We are coming out of the doldrums associated with the downsizing of Kodak," Hurlbutt told me a few days ago.

A survey conducted for Finger Lakes Wired by the Rochester Business Alliance found that hiring conditions are much better in 2007 than they were in 2004, the last time the survey was done.

About 165 businesses representing a cross section of industries said they collectively employ almost 69,000 people. By this time next year, they expect to have 73,000.

"The news is really good," Hurlbutt said. "There are good jobs in the region, and a lot of them need to be filled."

Positions most in need of people include both registered and licensed practical nurses, doctors, engineers, customer service representatives, sales reps, office and clerical workers, assemblers, machine operators and experienced managers.

Hurlbutt said the results illustrate the region's move to a service-based economy. But he quickly added that manufacturing remains important, with jobs that require more skills than blue-collar jobs of the past.

"Before, your chances of getting a good job with a high school education or a GED were pretty good," he said. "Now, you really do need some of that post-secondary education."

Fortunately, Monroe Community College, Genesee CC and Finger Lakes CC have programs in fields such as optics and heating, ventilation, air conditioning and cooling that prepare people for well-paying jobs.

Hurlbutt pointed out that the Web site of the RochesterWorks agency ([www.RochesterWorks.org](http://www.RochesterWorks.org)) has access to more than 8,000 positions.

### Good week

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