

## B2B, health care, computer and manufacturing jobs expected to lead the way in Boulder County

By Tony Kindelspire Longmont Times-Call  
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Posted: 10/27/2011 08:41:23 PM MDT

LONGMONT -- Patty Silverstein of Development Research Partners wasn't asked to give her usual economic forecast speech on Thursday morning, and it's probably just as well.

During a short question-and-answer session at the end of her talk at the Longmont Area Economic Council's Investor Series Breakfast, Silverstein was asked when she thought the economy would work its way out of the funk it's in, and she readily admitted she didn't have an answer -- referring to the current situation as "the new normal."

So to make her talk a bit more upbeat she focused on where she thought the jobs would be in Boulder County and the Denver metro area in the next few years.

Silverstein, who runs her own company and is a consultant for the Metro Denver Economic Development Corp., outlined the industry sectors that are important in the Denver metro area and the state, and of those some are particularly important for Boulder County. Among them are aerospace, biotechnology, health and education services, government and professional and business services.

It was that last category -- which includes accounting, legal services, print and copying services, among other professions -- that gave her a generally positive outlook about the economy, Silverstein said. She expects jobs in that category to grow about 4 percent this year and continue that growth next year.

"Why are we excited about growth in this sector? Because this is a business-serving sector," Silverstein told an audience of about 130 at the Plaza Conference Center.

Professional and business services is the second-largest business sector in Boulder County, employing about 17 percent of the overall workers.

Government is the largest sector in the county, accounting for about 20 percent of the jobs. That category includes all levels of government but primarily represents workers at the University of Colorado and the federal labs in Boulder.

Government won't see a lot of growth in the coming years, Silverstein said, but it wasn't expected to drop much, either. And it's also an important sector in the county, she said, because companies such as Ball Corp.'s aerospace division are fueled by government dollars, and Ball, in turn, supports many smaller companies that supply it with parts.

Another large sector in Boulder County is manufacturing, which accounts for nearly 10 percent of the work force.

"We've been kind of celebrating because we've seen a growth in manufacturing for the first time in about a dozen years," she said.

Computer and mathematical-related occupations, health care and architects and engineers are other important sectors in Boulder County where she expects to see growth in the next couple of years, Silverstein said.

Information technology and software also continues to be a huge sector in Boulder County, she said.

And although it's a relatively small percentage of jobs in Boulder County, energy production is hugely important in this region, because of companies such as Abound Solar and Vestas Wind Systems and the natural gas fields of Weld County.

Clean technology averaged 6 percent growth in jobs in each of the past five years, and fossil fuels jobs averaged 4 percent growth.

"It was our one industry cluster (statewide) that added employment in 2010," she said.

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