Some sectors of the Columbus area economy surely will do better than others. While real wages per job were flat countywide in the last five years, they grew by more than 30 percent in the financial services sector. And despite the recession, employment in health care jumped 10 percent from 2001 to 2004.

In general, though, don’t look for 2005 to be much different from 2004. Based on forecast data from the Kelley School of Business, here’s what to expect:

- **General level of business activity:** About the same as in 2004. Not much growth.
- **Wages:** Flat. Any increases will just about cover inflation.
- **Number of jobs:** Not much improvement over 2004. Countywide, an increase of perhaps 600 jobs, or about a 1.5 percent rise in payrolls.
- **Unemployment rate:** The average may be a little better than 2004. But the early months typically have the highest unemployment rate of the year. So expect the rate to approach 4 percent in the first quarter, improving to 3 percent by the fourth quarter.

**Sources**

Indiana Business Research Center, Kelley School of Business, Indiana University; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis; and the U.S. Census Bureau