The Big Picture: A look into the makings of an in-depth journalism project

By Teresa Auch
Ball State University's Art & Journalism Building

The Big Picture: A look into the makings of an in-depth journalism project

Teresa Auch

Honors 499: Senior Honors Project

Sheryl Swingley, Journalism Faculty Adviser

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana

March 7, 2007

Graduation date: Not sure
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my adviser, Professor Sheryl Swingley, for not only heading up this group project but also agreeing to act as my thesis adviser. The long hours she put in helped to keep the project going. Her work as my adviser helped to keep pushing me forward with the project.

I also would like to thank the staff of the Marion Chronicle-Tribune for agreeing to work with me and other Ball State students with this project. Their work to help us understand the ins and outs of the community and to edit our stories proved invaluable.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow project group members for their part in the project. Although my stories are my own, they often helped suggest people to talk to or various directions I could take my stories.
Abstract

On the surface level, journalism can seem an easy profession. Not much more to do than write and ask a few questions. But the profession requires a great deal of knowledge in various areas. Journalists must be skilled in interviewing, researching, lede writing, story structure and word usage. Their job doesn't end there, though. They must also be aware of how pictures and design elements can add depth to the story. They need to be able to think about the ethical and legal ramifications of what they write. Everyday stories often test these skills, but one of the hardest challenges for a journalist - and one that puts all these skills and more to a high test - is the in-depth story project. The project I chose for my thesis was to look into the economic and social life of Marion, Ind., during Spring 2006. The months of research and interviewing, along with a scientific survey, led to a special section in the Marion Chronicle-Tribune, which included several of my stories. Included in my thesis are my stories and analysis of what went in to writing them.
Contents:

Preface

Process and Analysis

Appendix A – Grant County survey

Appendix B – Project blog

Appendix C – Articles – Brain drain, Indiana Wesleyan University history, profile of a laid-off worker
Preface:

I was one of the lucky college students who knew what she wanted to do in college and stuck with it throughout college. Journalism was an early love for me. At first I was attracted to superficial aspects of it -- getting to know all the gossip, having an excuse to leave the classroom. But the more I learned, the more I loved. I remember my first lesson about media law and finding out that my principal could censor the student newspaper. I was outraged. How could my First Amendment right be suppressed? I now see it as one of my roles as a journalist to stand up for everyone's First Amendment rights. But it's more than that. I want to know I am helping people. I might not give them a house or teach them job skills, but I can give them information they need to make the choices they will face in life. And hopefully I can share their plight so others understand and maybe even help in return. As I finish my college career, I know I made the right decision for my life's path.
Process and Analysis

When it came time to start thinking about what topic I would choose for my Honors thesis, I struggled to think of something that would adequately demonstrate all the journalism skills I had learned at Ball State University, something that would go above and beyond the many stories I had already written for the Ball State Daily News and other newspapers. So when I saw the notice of a student group that would work with the Marion Chronicle-Tribune on a semester-long project, I knew I had found something that would combine all my skills in a way I never had before. The idea of an in-depth, investigative news project is to take a large issue in a community and spend time researching it, get to know all the issues and evaluate all the angles. Journalists constantly seek to find the deeper meaning of a story, and an in-depth project would allow me to go deeper than I ever had before.

My specific project was to work in a team of other journalism and sociology students along with the guidance of journalism professors to look into the state of Marion, Ind. The town, located in Grant County, had recently undergone horrible economic losses. Its base as a manufacturing community was falling apart as factories shut down and more than 2,000 people lost their jobs. However, time had passed since the closings, and new jobs had been announced. The editors of the Chronicle-Tribune wanted us to see where Marion's recovery was at. Was there a ray of hope or was economic growth something still in the future?

To do so, our team worked with editors to define the specific areas to focus on. Marion is home to Indiana Wesleyan University, the largest private university in Indiana and an economic base in Marion. We also focused on coming employers, such as the
To do so, our team worked with editors to define the specific areas to focus on.

Marion is home to Indiana Wesleyan University, the largest private university in Indiana and an economic base in Marion. We also focused on coming employers, such as the Dollar General distribution center. We looked at the population -- was it still on the decline, how was the growing Hispanic population affecting the community? We talked with banks to see how finances were. Were people going into debt, defaulting on loans? Finally, we created a scientific survey to gauge the attitude of the local community. Life might be getting better, but did people perceive it as getting better?

After weeks of research and interviewing, we began to formulate story ideas and other possible information layouts that would be used in the final special section. As a writer in the group, I was given the assignment of writing three stories: a look at how the community was tackling the loss of educated young adults, the affect of IWU on the community and a representative story of life for laid-off workers. These three stories constitute my thesis project, and the rest of my paper will explain the academics that went into them.

Before I could take any action, I knew I needed to have a better understanding of the community. Going into a new setting without any knowledge would not only slow me down, it would also probably result in people not giving me respect as I interviewed them. Both time and respect are essential when working on a story. If I have to spend an hour getting basic information from someone I’m interviewing, I lose time that could be used asking them more insightful questions. If they see me as an outsider who knows nothing of their community, then they are likely to dismiss me inwardly, making it harder for me to get them to open up. In-depth stories need in-depth responses from interview
subjects. So I started my research by reading. I read back issues of the Chronicle Tribune. Newspapers are often considered a good first-person resource because of their immediacy. They are written right after the fact, meaning people don’t have time to forget information. It also allowed me to see how the newspaper itself had treated the economic losses. I researched governmental data to find out the statistical profile of the county. The numbers gave me a precise view of the county and set me in a place of a concrete world. This foundation is important because specifics help to anchor a story and give it credibility.

Once I had a better idea of the community, I was then able to conduct background interviews with some of the movers and shakers in town, including the mayor and two board members of an economic growth group. These interviews, along with future interviews, tested what I had learned about interviewing. Most of the interviews were done in person, which is the ideal setting. People commute in more ways than words, and doing interviews in person allowed me to see my subjects in their setting, how they reacted to questions and how they carried themselves. For each interview I had set of questions prepared, but those were just a starting point. Reporters have to be open and attentive during an interview. They need to be prepared to ask new questions based off what they have heard.

For instance, in my interview with Mayor Wayne Seybold, I had prepared to ask him about brain drain, when college graduates leave an area, and what the city was doing to curb it. His response was not what I expected. He told me the city knew it couldn’t keep young adults, so it was going after people with young children who were looking to settle down. His answer led me to another line of questions about that and what the city
was doing to attract them. I ended up being able to use his answer in one of my stories. If I had not been flexible, I could have missed this.

Once the research was done, the team was able to formulate story ideas. Putting together the budget, or story list, for the special project was an intensive, day-long session that involved us discussing everything we had discovered and picking a focus for the end project. Even for something as in-depth as we did, the status of Marion was still too broad of a subject. It needed to be defined for the readers or else they would end up lost in a quagmire. Part of what we decided to focus on was the effect of IWU on Marion and how workers who had lost their jobs were coping — both of which I dealt with.

These led to my three stories. I volunteered for two of the stories I wrote and came up with the idea for the third story. I volunteered for the first two stories, one about the history of IWU and the other about brain drain, because of the significance of higher education on the community. Because of its manufacturing background, many Grant County residents have historically not gone to college. However, with the growing influence of IWU and the need to retain workers, I knew both areas were important to Grant County. I approached both of the stories on a large scale.

With the history of IWU, I spoke with administrators in the university. The main concern of the story was how it went from being bankrupt 20 years ago to the largest private college in Indiana. To do so, I looked at its two areas of growth — financial and student population. With the brain drain story, I spoke with several students who had participated in a program designed to retain student and compared them with numbers of student graduates. Both of the stories called for a wide look at the subject because of the many facets of the subjects.
My third story, however, I approached on a much more personal basis. Through our research, we had identified several factors of what life was like for the people who had lost their jobs when the factories closed a few years ago. The newspaper had already covered these and looked at the numbers and the effects. But it can often be hard for readers to feel connected to a story when it's on a grand scale. It's much easier for them to connect when they're reading about just one person. That is why I decided to write a story that would talk to a worker who fit many of the descriptions of other laid off workers – going back to work, dealing with payments, having to cut back on financial obligations and more. By studying one person this way, I could give a representative picture of a bigger problem – essentially, I could give the issue a face.

This same practice can be used, albeit on a smaller scale, in stories that take a broader focus, such as my first two. In fact, I chose to use this in the lede of my brain drain story. I introduce the readers to Kim Mack, who is representative of the general population I discuss in my story. The use of such a writing technique allows the reader to begin to get an idea about what the story will discuss but doesn't bog down the reader by dull writing or obscure, meaningless numbers. I used the profile to pull the reader in. The lede is one of the most important parts of a story. If readers can't make it through the first few paragraphs, forget about them reading the rest of it.

I knew it was important to make my other ledes just as engaging. For my history of IWU, I chose to paint a picture of the reader of what IWU was like in the early days. I chose this because it provides such an astounding contrast to where the university is and it again helps me to set up the nutgraph, or thesis, of the story – how IWU came back from near financial ruin. In this lede, I did choose to use numbers – this time, because
they helped to give the story weight. Everyone now knows that the university has a huge financial weight in the community and is growing by leaps and bounds. So telling the reader that its giving in 1986 was a mere $100,000 is significant enough for the reader to understand. The most important part of the lede, though, was the inclusion of the detail that university had to borrow money to pay teachers. Details are vital to stories because they help ground stories in the concrete. If I were to write the university was in debt, the reader would have only a vague notion of the situation. Being in debt could mean many things − anywhere from they're late on a few bills (not a big deal) to they owe the mob $1 million (a bit more interesting.) This detail helped to let readers know just how bad the financial situation was and to give them a defined area.

I couldn't write the ledes, though, until I had defined the structure my stories would take. Feature stories like these can take a multitude of forms − chronological, pro-con or point by point. Stories can even have a combination of structures, but ultimately, the structure needs to allow the reader to easily comprehend the story. For the history of IWIU, I decided to use a mix of chronological and point by point. I used chronology in the beginning to show the progression of the university, to show readers how the pace was set and that the turn around has been going on for the entire 20 years and not just the past few years. But I also needed to address how the university turned around, which I did by taking each point one by one − focus on fundraising, attracting more students and more.

For the story on brain drain, I used a version of pro-con. I began by talking about the program that encouraged students to stay in the area and the progress it had made. I included Mack in this area to show how it had succeeded with some students. But then I looked at how some students were still leaving the area and not feeling that they had
opportunities in Grant County. This highlighted the deficiencies of the program. The structure allowed me to take a fair, balanced look at how Marion was taking steps to curb a population decrease but how there was still work to be done.

For my profile story, I chose a point by point variation. I took the three areas of Deb's life—work, education and her future—and looked at each one separately. These were the main areas of concern for many people who had been laid off, so it made sense to study each on one on its own.

Another important facet of a story is quotes. The direct words that people say can add so much to a story—they express emotion and life. Because of their importance, they should be used not only sparingly, but only when they can have the best effect. Quoting someone saying “I liked so and so” does not exactly bring awe from the audience. A quote should be interesting and add color. For example, in my brain drain story, I included the quote, “It was pretty much a hunt and peck system and good luck on finding something.” This quote describes to the reader what it was like trying to find an internship—the basic meaning of the quote is that finding one was hard. But the way the professor said it was interesting and gives the readers something they can picture—people desperately searching for an internship. It also shows what I like to call attitude from the professor and is more likely to bring a reaction from the reader.

Other quotes I chose because of the strong language they used. In the story on IWU’s history, I used the quote, “Those students engage their studies with gusto,” he said. “They’re sacrificing to do this.” Active verbs are valued in journalism because they help to propel the story forward. In this quote, “engage” is a wonderful verb that conjures up images of physical actions. Because the speaker used that and other colorful words,
such as "gusto," instead of saying something simple such as "the students like their studies," I knew it would befit the story to use the quote instead of paraphrasing what he had said. The second part of the quote also emphasizes for the reader the struggles that non-traditional students have.

In my profile story, I chose to use the quote, "I’m the type of person if I’m going to take a class, I want to do well at it – I expect to get As," because of the detail it gives. If Ms. Buckler had ended the quote at "well at it," I probably would have paraphrased it. However, the addition at the end gives the reader a clear vision of what she means. Doing well, according to Ms. Buckler, is being at the top of her class. It also shows a bit of her personality. Some people are happy with getting Bs; some are thrilled to get them. But Ms. Buckler reveals through her quote she has a determined personality. In essence, the quote allows the reader to learn more about her.

One of the new aspects of this project was working with the group. Although I wrote all three stories on my own, I often worked with group members on various parts of the project. For instance, I conducted several of my interviews with a sociology student. This was the first time I had done an interview like that. I’m used to controlling an interview and deciding the direction it will take. I found that having my fellow group member with me had its pros and cons. She could think of things I might not have, but we also had to coordinate our efforts so as not to confuse ourselves or our interview subject. The group as a whole was also in charge of planning story ideas. Although editors with the Chronicle-Tribune knew certain things they wanted cover, the group had to sit down as a whole and decide where to direct our focus. It took compromise, but in the end the amount of input allowed us to choose the best direction.
Things did not always go smoothly, of course. Some group members would argue, fall behind on deadline, not do an assignment. We were all culpable of something, including myself. It could be frustrating at times. However, the experience is a lesson well learned. I was able to see what worked in a group setting and what didn’t – communication being the number one vital component.

A total of four months went into the project, and they were four hard ones. The project stretched me in a way I hadn’t been before as I had to learn how to juggle all the demands. I had to learn how to work on research while helping conduct the survey. I had to deal with professional deadlines while trying to complete my last semester at school. I think the biggest thing I took from this project was learning about the organization of such a large project – it’s impossible to undertake something as large as this if you don’t plan ahead and get everything squared away. Along with that is communication. Letting group members know what I was working on was pertinent to being efficient. It helped to avoid potential conflicts and let each of us use our time wisely. I don’t know if I’ll ever undertake something like this again, although I hope I will. The first time is always rough, I believe, and I feel that with the knowledge I gained from this project, I am much better prepared for another one.
Bibliography


Appendix A

Survey

Along with writing the stories, the group also conducted a scientific survey to assess the attitudes and financial character of Grant County residents. The group did this by randomly selecting names from the phone book and spending endless nights calling people. The survey took the time of the entire project but provided invaluable information for the stories we wrote.
As story ideas for the Marion Chronicle-Tribune's "Making Change" special project were reviewed, the desire to conduct a community survey took center stage.

With the aid of Ball State University business fellows, the community survey became a reality. Four hundred residents of Grant County who were 18 years or older participated in a community telephone survey that took place over a seven-week period during March and April.

The survey has a plus or minus error rate of 5 percentage points, which is an average error for such surveys.

References are made to the survey in a number of stories in "Making Change." The story that summarizes the community survey is "?????????? ??????????????????????????????????????????????"

1. How long have you lived in Grant County?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:

- 2% of respondents have lived in Grant County for less than one year.
- 6% of respondents have lived in Grant County for 1-3 years.
- 4% of respondents have lived in Grant County for 4-5 years.
- 4% of respondents have lived in Grant County for 6-10 years.
- 9% of respondents have lived in Grant County for 11-15 years.
- 9% of respondents have lived in Grant County for 16-20 years.
- 13% of respondents have lived in Grant County for 21-30 years.
- 13% of respondents have lived in Grant County for 31-40 years.
- 16% of respondents have lived in Grant County for 41-50 years.
- 13% of respondents have lived in Grant County for 51-60 years.
- 6% respondents have lived in Grant County for 61-70 years.
- 4% respondents have lived in Grant County for 71-80 years.
- 1% respondents have lived in Grant County for 81-90 years.

Seventeen percent of residents have lived here for 10 or fewer years while more than 83 percent have lived in Grant County for more than 10 years.

2. What brought you to Grant County?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:

- 47% of respondents were born here.
- 25% of respondents came here because of jobs.
- 8% of respondents came here because of marriage.
- 8% of respondents moved here with their parents.
- 4% of respondents came here for college.
- 4% of respondents came here because of family.
- 1% of respondents came here because of the economy.
- Only 3 (less than 1%) of respondents came here because of housing.
- Only 3 (less than 1%) of respondents moved here because of the school system.
- Only 2 (less than 1%) of respondents moved here for retirement.
- Only 1 (less than 1%) of respondents immigrated here.
- Only 1 (less than 1%) of respondent chose to live here.
- Only 1 (less than 1%) of respondent moved here to raise their children.
Approximately 63 percent of Grant County’s residents were born here or came here because their family moved here or because they had family here. Another 25 percent of residents moved to Grant County for a job.

3. Do you plan to live in Grant County for at least the next five years?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 84% of respondents said they would remain living in Grant County over the next five years.
- 16% of respondents said they would not remain living in Grant County over the next five years.
- 6% of respondents were not sure if they would remain in living in Grant County.

Issues:

4. What is the one best thing about living in Grant County?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 73 respondents say that the best thing in Grant County is family.
- 50 respondents like that it is a small town.
- 17 respondents like that it is cheap to live in Grant County.
- 17 respondents like it here because of their friends in Grant County.
- 17 respondents like the county living in Grant County.
- 16 respondents call here home.
- 13 respondents say that the community is friendly in Grant County.
- 13 respondents like the community/area.
- 9 respondents like that there is a religious base in Grant County.
- 8 respondents like the universities in Grant County.
- 8 respondents have always lived here.
- 7 respondents like the closeness of the community.
- 5 respondents say that there are good people living in Grant County.
- 5 respondents like the convenience of living in Grant County.
- 5 respondents like that it is safe.
- 4 respondents like that they are close to cultural activities.
- 4 respondents like the school system in Grant County.
- 3 respondents like that it is easy to get around in Grant County.
- 3 respondents like the employment opportunities in Grant County.
- 3 respondents say they have a good life in Grant County.
- 3 respondents think that the community is a good size.
- 3 respondents like that they live on a farm in Grant County.
- 3 respondents like that it is quiet.
- 2 respondents like the activities in Grant County.
- 2 respondents like that they know everyone.
- 2 respondents like the North side of Grant County.
- 3 respondents like that they can raise their children in Grant County.
- 1 respondent likes the atmosphere in Grant County.
- 1 respondent says that the community is clean.
- 1 respondent says that there are familiar surroundings in Grant County.
- 1 respondent likes the festivals in Grant County.
- 1 likes that her husband lives in Grant County.
- 1 respondent likes Mi Pueblo in Grant County.
- 1 respondent likes the neighbors.
- 1 respondent likes the openness in Grant County.
- 1 respondent likes the park system in Grant County.
- 1 respondent likes the road system in Grant County.
- 1 respondent likes the changing seasons.
- 1 respondent likes the sporting events in Grant County.
- 1 respondent likes the unity in Grant County.
- 1 respondent likes the walkway as the best thing in Grant County.
- 1 respondent likes the water as the best thing in Grant County.
75 respondents do not know what the one best thing is in Grant County.

5. When thinking about the quality of life in Grant County, would you say it is very bad, somewhat bad, neither good nor bad, somewhat good, very good or excellent?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 4% of respondents claim the quality of life in Grant County is very bad.
- 16% of respondents claim the quality of life in Grant County is somewhat bad.
- 31% of respondents claim the quality of life in Grant County is neither good nor bad.
- 35% of respondents claim the quality of life in Grant County is somewhat good.
- 13% of respondents claim the quality of life in Grant County is very good.
- 1% of respondents claim the quality of life in Grant County is excellent.

When you think of possible issues facing Grant County, would you say the following are not important, important or very important?

6. Keeping businesses

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- Only 1 (0.3%) of the respondents believe that keeping businesses in Grant County is not important.
- 25% respondents believe that keeping businesses in Grant County is important.
- 75% respondents believe that keeping businesses in Grant County is very important.

7. Attracting new businesses

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 1% of respondents believe that attracting new businesses into Grant County is not important.
- 19% of respondents believe that attracting new businesses into Grant County is important.
- 80% of respondents believe that attracting new businesses into Grant County is very important.

8. Providing affordable housing (housing people can buy)

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 13% of respondents believe that providing affordable housing is not important in Grant County.
- 37% of respondents believe that providing affordable housing is important in Grant County.
- 49% of respondents believe that providing affordable housing is very important in Grant County.
- Only three (less than 1%) of respondents had no opinion.

9. Needing to build more housing

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 39% of respondents believe that it is not important to build more housing in Grant County.
- 43% of respondents believe that it is important to build more houses in Grant County.
- 16% of respondents believe that it is very important to build more houses in Grant County.
- 3% of respondents had no opinion.

10. Improving K-12 education
Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
2% of respondents believe that improving K-12 education is not important.
38% of respondents believe that improving K-12 education is important.
58% respondents believe that improving K-12 education is very important.
2% respondents had no opinion.

11. Improving one and two-year educational opportunities after high school

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
7% of respondents believe that it is not important to improve one and two-year educational opportunities after high school.
52% of respondents believe that it is important to improve one and two-year educational opportunities after high school.
41% of respondents believe that it is very important to improve one and two-year educational opportunities after high school.
Only 3 (less than 1%) respondents had no opinion.

12. Improving college education opportunities

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
10% of respondents believe that it is not important to improve college educational opportunities.
50% of respondents believe that it is important to improve college educational opportunities.
39% of respondents believe that it is very important to improve college educational opportunities.
1% of respondents had no opinion.

13. Protecting the environment

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
5% of respondents believe that protecting the environment is not important.
51% of respondents believe that protecting the environment is important.
44% of respondents believe that protecting the environment is very important.
Only 2 (less than 1%) respondents had no opinion.

14. Having enough volunteers to support organizations and social service agencies

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
9% respondents believe that having enough volunteers to support organizations and social services agencies is not important.
56% of respondents believe that having enough volunteers to support organizations and social services agencies is important.
34% of respondents believe that having enough volunteers to support organizations and social services agencies is very important.
Only 3 (less than 1%) respondents had no opinion.

15. Reducing poverty throughout the county

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
3% of respondents believe that reducing poverty throughout the county is not important.
42% of respondents believe that reducing poverty throughout the county is important.
54% of respondents believe that reducing poverty throughout the county is very important.
1% of respondents had no opinion.

16. Making the community a safer place to live

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
3% of respondents believe that making the community a safer place to live is not important.
39% of respondents believe that making the community a safer place to live is important.
58% of respondents believe that making the community a safer place to live is very important.

17. Reducing crime

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 2% of respondents believe that reducing crime is not important.
- 39% of respondents believe that reducing crime is important.
- 59% of respondents believe that reducing crime is very important.

18. Providing better shopping

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 2% of respondents believe that it is not important to provide better shopping in Grant County.
- 49% of respondents believe that it is important to provide better shopping in Grant County.
- 20% of respondents believe that it is very important to provide better shopping in Grant County.
- 1% of respondents had no opinion.

19. Providing more recreational facilities

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 22% of respondents believe that providing more recreational facilities is not important.
- 49% of respondents believe that providing more recreational facilities is important.
- 27% of respondents believe that providing more recreational facilities is very important.
- 2% of respondents had no opinion.

20. Providing more cultural opportunities

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 22% of respondents believe that providing more cultural opportunities is not important.
- 56% of respondents believe that providing more cultural opportunities is important.
- 20% of respondents believe that providing more cultural opportunities is very important.
- 2% of respondents had no opinion.

21. How much confidence do you have in your local government?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 25% of respondents claim they do not have much confidence in the local government of Grant County.
- 52% of respondents claim they have some confidence in the local government of Grant County.
- 18% respondents claim they have a lot of confidence in the local government of Grant County.
- 5% of respondents had no opinion.

22. How much confidence do you have in your local government to solve the problems that most affect your own household or family?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 29% of respondents claim they do not have much confidence in the local government solving problems that most affect their own household or family.
- 55% of respondents claim they have some confidence in the local government solving problems that most affect their own household or family.
- 11% of respondents claim they have a lot of confidence in the local government solving problems that most affect their own household or family.
- 5% respondents had no opinion.
23. Which of the following best describes your current employment situation?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 116 respondents are employed full time.
- 9 respondents are temporarily on leave from work.
- 16 respondents are not working or not looking for work.
- 3 respondents do not fit into any of the categories.
- 12 respondents are in another situation.
- 35 respondents are employed part time (1 job).
- 9 respondents are employed part time (2 jobs).
- 27 respondents are self-employed full time.
- 13 respondents are self-employed part time.
- 4 respondents are actively looking for work.
- 4 respondents refused to answer.
- 5 respondents were laid off.
- 97 respondents are retired.

24. What type of work do you do?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 1 respondent is an attorney.
- 2 respondents work in a bank.
- 1 respondent is a bus driver.
- 1 respondent works for the city.
- 3 respondents do clerical work.
- 1 respondent is a computer programmer.
- 5 respondents work in construction.
- 3 respondents work with cosmetics.
- 1 respondent is a delivery driver.
- 29 respondents work in educational fields.
- 7 respondents work in entertainment.
- 9 respondents work in facility management.
- 5 respondents are farmers.
- 2 respondents work in a funeral home.
- 12 respondents work in government.
- 5 respondents work in health care.
- 7 respondents are homemakers.
- 15 respondents are managers.
- 33 respondents work in manufacturing.
- 8 respondents work in the medical field.
- 1 respondent work for a newspaper.
- 11 respondents are nurses.
- 43 respondents work some other type of work or were not employed.
- 2 respondents work as a pastor.
- 1 respondent work for the power company.
- 15 respondents work in a professional setting.
- 1 respondent work in real estate.
- 2 respondents work as a receptionist.
- 15 respondents work in retail.
- 96 respondents are retired.
- 15 respondents work in sales.
- 1 respondent is a secretary.
- 2 respondents are self-employed.
- 21 respondents work in the service sector.
- 3 respondents work in social work.
- 4 respondents are students.
- 3 respondents work in television.
1 respondent works in transportation.
4 respondents work for their local utility company.
1 respondent works from home.

25. **Do you work in Grant County?**

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
57% of respondents do work in Grant County.
10% of respondents do not work in Grant County.
24% of the respondents were retired from work.
9% of the respondents did not work for variety of reasons.

26. **Have you lost your job due to the recent plant closures in Grant County?**

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
6% of respondents had lost a job due to the recent manufacturing plant closures in Grant County.
94% of respondents were not applicable for this question.

27. **Have you obtained a new job of...**

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
Only 1 (less than 1%) of respondent received a new job of equal qualifications with more pay.
2% of respondents received a new job of equal qualifications with less pay.
3% of respondents received a more qualified job.
Only 3 (less than 1%) of respondents received a less qualified job.
94% of respondents were not affected by job loss.

28. **Did you attend any higher education to obtain any type of degree to better your career?**

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
12% of respondents attended a higher education institution to obtain any type of degree to better their career.
82% of respondents had not attend a higher education institution to better their career.

29. **What do you expect will happen to your company's total local employment over the next year?**

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
4% of respondents believe their company's total employment over the next year will decrease greatly.
10% of respondents believe their company's total employment over the next year will decrease moderately.
24% of respondents believe their company's total employment over the next year will not change.
12% of respondents believe their company's total employment over the next year will increase moderately.
Only 1 (less than 1%) respondent believes his/her company's total employment over the next year will increase greatly.
50% of respondents do not know or did not answer.

30. **Do you know of anyone who lost their job due to the recent plant closures in Grant County?**

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
66% of respondents know of someone who had lost a job due to the recent plant closures in Grant County.
34% of respondents did not know of someone who had lost a job due to the recent plant closures in Grant County.
31. Would you say that you and your family are financially worse off, the same or better off than you were a year ago?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 25% of respondents believe that they are worse off financially than they were a year ago.
- 53% of respondents believe that financially, they are at the same level they were at a year ago.
- 21% of respondents believe that they are better off financially than they were a year ago.
- 1% of respondents were not sure.

32. Looking ahead, do you think that a year from now you will be worse off, the same or better off?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 18% of respondents believe that they will be worse off financially in the upcoming year.
- 43% of respondents believe that there will be no change in their finances for the upcoming year.
- 33% of respondents believe that they will be better off financially in the upcoming year.
- 6% of respondents were not sure.

33. Thinking about Grant County, will the economic condition of Grant County within the next 12 months get better, stay the same or get worse?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 15% of respondents believe that the economic condition of Grant County will get worse within the next year.
- 28% of respondents believe that there will be no change in the economic condition of Grant County within the next year.
- 52% of respondents believe that the economic condition of Grant County will get better within the next year.
- 5% of respondents were not sure.

When you think of companies in Grant County, would you say the following companies are not important, important or very important to Grant County's future success?

34. Dollar General Distribution Center

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 3% of respondents believe that Dollar General is not important to Grant County.
- 40% of respondents believe that Dollar General is important to Grant County.
- 57% of respondents believe that Dollar General is very important to Grant County.
- Only 1 (less than 1%) respondent had no opinion.

35. Dunham's Distribution Center

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 16% of respondents believe that Dunham's Distribution Center is not important to Grant County.
- 59% of respondents believe that Dunham's Distribution Center is important to Grant County.
- 25% of respondents believe that Dunham's Distribution Center is very important to Grant County.
- 2% of respondents had no opinion.

36. General Motors (GM)

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 2% of respondents believe that GM is not important to Grant County.
- 27% of respondents believe that GM is important to Grant County.
- 71% of respondents believe that GM is very important to Grant County.

37. Indiana Wesleyan University
Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
10% of respondents believe that IWU is not important to Grant County.
44% of respondents believe that IWU is important to Grant County.
45% of respondents believe that IWU is very important to Grant County.
1% respondents had no opinion.

38. Ivy Tech State College

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
6% of respondents believe that Ivy Tech is not important to Grant County.
49% of respondents believe that Ivy Tech is important to Grant County.
45% of respondents believe that Ivy Tech is very important to Grant County.
Only 3 (or less than 1%) of respondents had no opinion.

39. Marion General Hospital

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
4% of respondents believe that the hospital is not important to Grant County.
46% of respondents believe that the hospital is important to Grant County.
50% of respondents believe that the hospital is very important to Grant County.
Only 1 (less than 1%) respondent had no opinion.

40. Taylor University

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
7% of respondents believe that Taylor University is not important to Grant County.
53% of respondents believe that Taylor University is important to Grant County.
38% respondents believe that Taylor University is very important to Grant County.
2% of respondents had no opinion.

41. Veterans' Hospital

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
7% of respondents believe that the Veteran's Hospital is not important to Grant County.
45% of respondents believe that the Veteran's Hospital is important to Grant County.
48% of respondents believe that the Veteran's Hospital is very important to Grant County.
Only 3 (fewer than 1%) of respondents had no opinion.

42. Wal-Mart Distribution Center

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
3% of respondents believe that the Wal-Mart Distribution Center is not important to Grant County.
31% of respondents believe that the Wal-Mart Distribution Center is important to Grant County.
66% of respondents believe that the Wal-Mart Distribution Center is very important to Grant County.
Only 1 (less than 1%) respondent had no opinion.

43. Would you consider any other company as having an impact on Grant County?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
25 respondents mentioned Dana.
13 respondents mentioned the ethanol plant.
5 respondents mentioned the educational system.
4 respondents mentioned Woodmark.
3 respondents mentioned Thompson.
2 respondents mentioned Winterfield.
2 respondents mentioned World Gospel Mission.
2 respondents mentioned AVIS.
2 respondents mentioned Marsh.
1 respondent mentioned Amcost.
1 respondent mentioned Atlas.
1 respondent mentioned Boots Creek.
1 respondent mentioned Cornerstone.
1 respondent mentioned Elder Beerman.
1 respondent mentioned the Humane Society.
1 respondent mentioned Lanco's.
1 respondent mentioned Lowe's.
1 respondent mentioned Meijer's.
1 respondent mentioned the social services.
1 respondent mentioned Speedway.
1 respondent mentioned Tulick's Plastics.

What is your overall opinion of the following educational institutions in Grant County?

44. Public schools (K-12)

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
5% of respondents believe that the public schools in Grant County are very good.
44% of respondents believe that the public schools in Grant County are good.
17% of respondents believe that the public schools in Grant County are neither good nor poor.
13% of respondents believe that the public schools in Grant County are poor.
1% of respondents believe that the public schools in Grant County are very poor.
20% of respondents were unsure about the quality of the Grant County public schools.

45. Indiana Wesleyan University

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
35% of respondents believe that the education at Indiana Wesleyan University is very good.
45% of respondents believe that the education at Indiana Wesleyan University is good.
4% of respondents believe that the education at Indiana Wesleyan University is neither good nor poor.
3% of respondents believe that the education at Indiana Wesleyan University is poor.
13% of respondents were unsure of their opinion about the education at Indiana Wesleyan University.

46. Ivy Tech State College

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
21% of respondents believe that the education at Ivy Tech College is very good.
55% of respondents believe that the education at Ivy Tech College is good.
8% of respondents believe that the education at Ivy Tech College is neither good nor poor.
1% of respondents believe that the education at Ivy Tech College is poor.
Only 2 (less than 1%) of respondents believe that the education at Ivy Tech College is very poor.
15% of respondents were unsure of their opinion about the education at Ivy Tech College.

47. Taylor University

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
33% of respondents believe that the education at Taylor University is very good.
49% of respondents believe that the education at Taylor University is good.
4% of respondents believe that the education at Taylor University is neither good nor poor.
1% of respondents believe that the education at Taylor University is poor.
13% of respondents were unsure of their opinion about the education at Taylor University.
48. Do you rent or are you buying your home?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
13% of respondents were currently renting the residence in which they reside.
43% of respondents were currently buying their house they reside in.
42% of respondents currently own the house they reside in.
2% of respondents are residing in another situation not suggested above.

49. Why did you move to your current neighborhood?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
53 respondents live where they live because of the location.
43 respondents live where they live because it is close to someone or something.
39 respondents live where they live because it was cheap.
27 respondents live where they live because they are in the country.
22 respondents did not know why they live where they live.
17 respondents live where they live because of affordability.
16 respondents live where they live because they liked the house.
15 respondents live where they live because of family.
13 respondents live where they live because of employment.
12 respondents live where they live because it was their parent’s house.
9 respondents live where they live because it is quiet.
8 respondents live where they live because it is in a small town.
8 respondents live where they live because of marriage.
7 respondents live where they live because they grew up there.
7 respondents live where they live because of the schools.
6 respondents live where they live because it was a new location.
5 respondents live where they live because they were born there.
5 respondents live where they live because they built their own house.
4 respondents live where they live because of availability.
4 respondents live where they live because they moved into a bigger house.
4 respondents live where they live because it is their first home.
4 respondents live where they live because it fit them.
4 respondents live where they live because of more space.
4 respondents live where they live because they live with family.
4 respondents live where they live because of low crime.
3 respondents live where they live because of the area.
3 respondents live where they live because of economics.
3 respondents live where they live because the husband grew up here.
3 respondents live where they live because they moved up.
3 respondents live where they live because they had no other options.
3 respondents live where they live because of the nursing help.
3 respondents live where they live because it is safe.
2 respondents live where they live because it is peaceful.
2 respondents live where they live because of chance.
2 respondents live where they live because they wanted out of the country.
2 respondents live where they live because of the good neighborhood.
2 respondents live where they live because it was their grandparent’s house.
2 respondents live where they live because they wanted to buy the house.
2 respondents live where they live because it is in a trailer park.
2 respondents live where they live because the house fit their needs.
2 respondents live where they live because it was near their church.
2 respondents live where they live because they own lots.
2 respondents live where they live because of the prestige.
1 respondent lives where he or she lives because of apartment living.
1 respondent lives where he or she lives because it is clean.
1 respondent lives where he or she lives because the house was inherited.
1 respondent lives where he or she lives because it is close to Ivanhoe’s.
1 respondent lives where he or she lives because it is a larger home.
50. Have you looked for housing elsewhere in the county, but could not find it?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 13% of the respondents have looked elsewhere for housing in Grant County for a variety of reasons.
- 87% of respondents have not looked elsewhere in Grant County for housing.

51. What has hindered you in your search for different housing?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 8% of respondents claimed that houses on the market are too expensive.
- (less than 1%) respondent says that houses on the market are too small.
- (less than 1%) respondent says that houses on the market are too large.
- 1% respondents says that housing he/she can afford is too far from work.
- 3% respondents claimed some other reason that hindered their housing search.
- 2 (less than 1%) respondents did not know why they could not find different housing.
- 87% of respondents had not looked for different housing elsewhere in Grant County.

52. How supportive would you be of the development of an affordable housing project two blocks from your home? (e.g., affordable housing: low income housing!)

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 19% of respondents were very opposed to having an affordable housing development located within two blocks of their home.
- 21% of respondents were opposed to having an affordable housing development located within two blocks of their home.
- 15% of respondents had no opinion of having an affordable housing development located within two blocks of their home.
- 26% of respondents were somewhat supportive to having an affordable housing development located within two blocks of their home.
- 8% of respondents were very supportive to having an affordable housing development located within two blocks of their home.
- 5% of respondents already live near an affordable housing project.
- 6% of respondents did not know.
- 1 (less than 1%) response was not applicable.

53. How supportive would you be of the development of an apartment complex two blocks from your home?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 23% of respondents were very opposed to having an apartment complex located within two blocks of their home.
- 22% of respondents were somewhat opposed to having an apartment complex located within two blocks of their home.
- 18% of respondents had no opinion to having an apartment complex located within two blocks of their home.
- 24% of respondents were somewhat supportive to having an apartment complex located within two blocks of their home.
7% of respondents were very supportive of having an apartment complex located within two blocks of their home.
1% of respondents all ready live near an apartment complex.
5% of respondents were not sure.

54. What do you have loans for?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 141 of the respondents currently have a home loan.
- 131 of the respondents currently have a vehicle loan.
- 92 of the respondents do not currently have any loans.
- 45 of the respondents currently have a loan for educational purposes.
- 15 of the respondents currently have a loan for the consolidation of credit card bills.
- 10 respondents currently have loans for other reasons that are not specified above.
- 7 of the respondents currently have a second/vacation home loan.
- 5 of the respondents currently have a loan for land.
- 3 of the respondents currently have a loan for a boat.
- 1 respondent currently has a loan for a camper.

55. Do you use credit cards?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 71% of respondents use credit cards.
- 29% of respondents do not use credit cards.
- Only 2 (less than 1%) of respondents did not disclose this information.

56. Approximately, how many do you use?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 60% of respondents have between 1 and 3 credit cards.
- 16% respondents have between 4 and 6 credit cards.
- 2 (less than 1%) respondents have between 7-10 credit cards.
- 29% of respondents would not disclose this information.

57. Do you always pay off your balance each month?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
- 41% of respondents always pay off the balance of their credit cards.
- 31% of respondents do not always pay off the balance of their credit cards.
- 28% of respondents refused to respond to this question.

58. If you don’t pay off your credit card balance each month and if you’re willing to tell us, what is your approximate average balance on all of your credit cards that you carry over each month?

Out of the 124 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey who do not pay off their credit cards every month:
- 44 respondents who use credit cards carry over a balance of less than $100.
- 3 respondents who use credit cards carry over a balance between $101 and $300.
- 3 respondents who use credit cards carry over a balance between $301 and $500.
- 11 respondents who use credit cards carry over a balance between $501 and $750.
- 26 respondents who use credit cards carry over a balance between $751 and $1,000.
- 40 respondents who use credit cards carry over a balance of more than $1,000.
- 1 respondent was not sure what their credit card balance is.

Demographic information:

59. What is the respondent’s gender?
Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
42% respondents were male.
58% respondents were female.

60. Which part of the county do you consider yourself to live in?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
11.5% of respondents live in the Northwest part of Grant County (Sweetser, Jalapa, Mier).
8.5% of respondents live in the Northeast part of Grant County (Landess, Hanfield, Van Buren).
9% of respondents live in the Southwest part of Grant County (Sawayzee, Herbst, Roseburg, Michaels Ville, Hackleman, Point Isabelle, Rigdon).
35% respondents live in the Southeast part of Grant County (Gas City, Jonesboro, Upland, Fairmount, Fowlerton, Mathews).
36% of respondents live in Marion city limits.

61. What is your age?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
12% of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 24.
10% of respondents were between the ages of 25 and 32.
7% of respondents were between the ages of 33 and 40.
23% of respondents were between the ages of 41 and 50.
23% of respondents were between the ages of 51 and 60.
13% of respondents were between the ages of 61 and 70.
7% of respondents were between the ages of 71 and 80.
4% of respondents were between the ages of 81 and 90.
1 (less than 1%) respondent was more than 91 years old.

62. What race do you consider yourself to be?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
93% of respondents were white or Caucasian.
6% of respondents were black or African American.
3 (or less than 1%) of respondents were Asian.
1 (or less than 1%) of respondents was Native American.
2 (or less than 1%) of respondents were of a race not listed above.

63. Are you of Hispanic origin?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
6% of respondents were of Hispanic origin.
94% of respondents were not of Hispanic origin.

64. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
7% respondents had some high school.
36% respondents were a high school graduate.
3% of respondents had a G.E.D.
8% of respondents attended a trade or technical school.
9% of respondents attended a community college (2-year).
5% of respondents completed community college (2-year).
12% of respondents attended a college (4-year).
14% of respondents completed college (4-year).
11% of respondents went for a master’s degree.
1% of respondents achieved a degree higher than a master’s degree.
2 (or less than 1%) of the respondents refused to answer.
65. Do you have children?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
  78% of the respondents do have children.
  22% of the respondents do not have children.

If they do have children, have they attended or are they attending...

66. Indiana Wesleyan University

Of the 313 or 78% of respondents who have children:
  22% of their children have attended or are attending Indiana Wesleyan University.
  82% of their children are not attending, have not attended or are not of the age to attend.

67. Ivy Tech State College

Of the 313 or 78% of respondents who have children:
  15% of their children have attended or are attending Ivy Tech State College.
  85% children are not attending, have not attended or are not of age to attend.

68. Taylor University

Of the 313 or 78% of respondents who have children:
  13% of children have attended or are attending Ivy Tech State College.
  87% of children are not attending, have not attended or are not of age to attend.

69. What was your annual household income for the year 2015?

Out of the 400 respondents for the Grant County Community Survey:
  9% of respondents fell in the income category of less than $15,000.
  12.5% of respondents fell between the income category of $15,001 and $24,999.
  12% of respondents fell between the income category of $25,000 and $34,999.
  12.5% of respondents fell between the income category of $35,000 and $44,999.
  16% of respondents fell between the income category of $45,000 and $54,999.
  6% of respondents fell between the income category of $55,000 and $64,999.
  4.5% of respondents fell between the income category of $65,000 and $74,999.
  4% of respondents fell between the income category of $75,000 and $84,999.
  3% of respondents fell between the income category of $85,000 and $94,999.
  4% of respondents fell between the income category of $95,000 and $104,999.
  3.5% of respondents fell in the income category of $105,000 or more.
  19% of respondents chose not to disclose this information.
Appendix B

As part of the project, I wrote a blog entry for the Chronicle Tribune talking about my experience with the project. I have included the blog entry in this section.
Chronicle Tribune blog entry - I like to consider myself a mini-expert on Grant County now. I might not have ever lived there, but something tells me I could hold my own with a resident if we were to talk about how job growth has been. I think this is only a natural result, though, of having immersed myself in this in-depth project for the past four months.

Through this project, I've gotten to see for myself all the effort that goes into an in-depth project. I can actually understand what other reporters say when they talk about all the frustration and tears they spent on one.

Let me tell you - it's not easy. In fact, one of the ways I thought it would have been better than a shorter project turned out to be even more frustrating. I generally cringe when I have information or a quote that I just love but because of space restraints I have to leave out. Finally, I thought, I have a space big enough so I can include everything. But when you do extensive interviewing and researching, you end up with even more information than you know what to do with. Trust me - I can easily think of 10 more stories I wished we could have done.

So just what did I learn about Grant County in all my research? I learned what all goes into planning a county's future. I've always heard the terms "economic development" and "incentives" before, but they were always abstract ideas with no meaning to me. I can tell you now, though, that this is a very involved process. Grant County shows just how important it is for a town to plan its future. Of course I learned more, but that would take another special section for me to tell you.

I do know, though, that I could work on another in-depth project. This experience has helped me to learn how to identify issues that are worthy of spending time on. It's also helped me see how I can use all the lessons I've learned in school (and not just the ones from my journalism classes) and combine them to make a project like this work.

But most importantly, I've learned that people who do phone surveys are people just like you and me, and they just want to help our society, whether it's by helping us to understand ourselves better or to identify problems and solutions. They deserve to be treated with respect, even if it's just a simple, "No thank you, I do not want to take a survey."

Unless of course it's a telemarketer trying to sell you something. Then the gloves come off.
Appendix C

Articles

1. Brain drain

2. Indiana Wesleyan University history

3. Profile of a laid-off worker
Brain drain
Kim Mack never thought she would stay in Marion after graduating from Indiana Wesleyan University.

"I didn’t envision I would stay in Indiana," she said.

However, the English major senior, who went to high school in Huron, Ohio, and now lives in Angola, already has a job lined up in Marion after her graduation this May, all because of the university’s effort to encourage students to stay in the area.

With a 2.5 percent drop in Grant County’s population since 2002, Indiana Wesleyan University started to implement in 2004 programs that would encourage students such as Mack to stay in Grant County, or at least Indiana, after graduation. The programs, which are funded by a $750,000 Lilly Endowment grant, strive to provide students connections with local businesses and give them a place to test out their business ideas, all in order to try to stop the flow of young professionals leaving the area.

About 65 people stay in Grant County after graduation each year, according to the university. That’s 16 percent of the 417 Grant County residents enrolled at the university as traditional students.

Mike Mendenhall leads the Innovative Network, the program in charge of handling the grant and programs.

The main part of the Innovative Network is the internship program, which helps students find appropriate businesses for them to work for. Mendenhall said the program filled a huge need for students who previously had no help in finding an internship.

"It was pretty much a hunt and peck system and good luck on finding something," Mendenhall said.
The internship program started in the spring of 2004 with 20 internships. This semester, more than 50 students are taking part and more than 225 have participated since it began. Although it's too soon to tell if the program is working and no set data have been collected, Mendenhall said he knows of about six students who stayed in the county after graduation.

Mack is participating this semester with an internship with the Center for Distributed Learning at IWU. She helps to edit and format courses and will stay on after graduation. She attributes her success to the Innovative Network.

"I definitely feel it’s helped me make connections," she said. "It’s helped me understand the outside world and the professional world."

The program is also launching a plan to give students the budget to make their business ideas reality. Mendenhall and others have begun to look at applications for two student-run businesses that will go inside the new student center.

The hope is that students will be able to get their businesses going and then after graduation, move them into the Marion or Grant County community, Mendenhall said.

"If they've done their homework properly... I think they have a tremendous opportunity to be successful," he said.

IWU is not working alone on this, though. Taylor University, which also received a Lilly grant, and Indiana Tech State College work with IWU on their projects. The local community has also gotten involved with the help of the Delaware County Economic Growth Council and the Marion Chamber of Commerce.
The five groups have started work on a certified technology park, which would give people a place to help start their own businesses, Jeff Southworth, president of the economic growth council, said.

"The key is to get them established in your community, and they won’t go anywhere," he said.

The park could be used for anyone who has a business idea, not just students.

Two business companies have agreed to survey the park, Southworth said. The next step will be to apply to the state for money to fund the park.

Creating job opportunities is only one part of encouraging people to stay, though. Marion and Grant County need to offer other incentives that make people want to live here, Mendenhall said. To this aim, the Innovative Network has used its money to set up cyber cafes throughout the community, giving the public access to the Internet for free. So far cafes have been installed in places such as The Tree of Life book store and the YMCA. A larger version will be a part of the IWU student center when it opens.

However, not all people agree Grant County should place its focus on retaining recent graduates.

"Young people don’t want to live here," Mayor Wayne Seybold said. "It’s boring."

Instead, the community needs to work on bringing in families who want a place to settle down, something the county is better able to provide for, Seybold said.

He encourages young adults to go out and experience life in the larger, metropolitan areas, he said. Then, when they get older and tired of paying higher living costs, they will want to return.
Grant County can't strive to be a cultural center with lots of entertainment for a younger crowd. It can, however, provide parents with less of a commute so they can take part in their children's lives, for instance, Seybold said.

"Let's take a family who is struggling in California and say, 'Come to Indiana; here's an incentive package,'" Seybold said.

And although the Innovative Network provides students with community connections, the community might just not have enough jobs for graduates.

Lindsey Bunn, senior photography major, has an internship with the Innovative Network, taking pictures for promotional use. The program has helped build her confidence, she said, but she plans on moving to the Cincinnati area after graduation.

"There's just not a lot of photography jobs in Marion unless I started my own," Bunn said.

The Innovative Network has worked mainly with the business, science and communication departments, Mendenhall said.

Bunn said she would like to see the program encourage other departments to get involved to help increase the variety of businesses that come to the program.

"The bigger we get, the more people might say 'hey let's take a look at these people,'" she said.

Mendenhall said although other departments do not officially work with the Innovative Network, he encourages all students to take part in the program.

And while program does help provide some students with the connections to find jobs in Grant County, the students might not stay.
Mack said she plans to go to graduate school, which would mean she will probably leave Marion after a few years. However, she said she does enjoy the community and would think about coming back.

"I see a lot of potential here," she said.
Indiana Wesleyan University history
It's no secret that Indiana Wesleyan University was in an alarming situation when former
President Jim Barnes took over in 1986.

The university had 218 freshmen in the fall of 1987, and the adult studies program had
718 students overall. Giving was hitting out at just $100,000. The university was so in
debt it had to borrow money to pay the professors.

"There really wasn't a dime of liquidity," Barnes said. "It was really pretty dire."

But Barnes, who wanted to turn the university around, had no idea that IWU would make
such a huge change.

In 20 years, the institution has gone from almost-certain death to being the largest private
college in Indiana, including the University of Notre Dame.

The freshmen class for 2006 was more than 700 students, more than triple the size 20
years ago. Adult enrollment is more than 10,000 students, 13 times more than when
Barnes took over.

Increased enrollment hasn't hurt the university academically, either. Student GPA went
from 2.8 in '87 to the current 3.4.

The changes aren't accidental, though. IWU knew it needed to focus on increasing
student enrollment, getting more fundraising and, maybe in the end what might be most
important of all, the adult education program.

Barnes knew that without more students, the university would have a hard time turning
things around, he said.

"Every additional student you bring in brings in money," he said.
The institution had failed to work with its core base, the Indiana Wesleyan Church. Barnes found that about 50 percent of students who belonged to a Wesleyan church would then go on to a Wesleyan college, a number he wanted to increase, he said.

Twenty years ago, 450 Wesleyan students went to IWU. Today, 900 are enrolled.

"In a way, serving to the Wesleyan Church was our core business," he said. "It was sort of back to our primary roots."

Since 1986, traditional student enrollment has grown each year, Barnes said. So has financial giving.

Giving is up more than tenfold at $1.3 million, which Barnes credits former Vice President of Institutional Advancement Terry Munday for.

"He turned our fundraising efforts upside down," Barnes said.

About 16 years ago, the institution hired a group to project how much money could be made. The final prediction was $4 million.

IWU tripled that, raising $12 million.

The group later said the university could expect to raise $25 million one year; it got $50 million.

Munday said the change came from organizing fundraising efforts, including in the local community, which the university had not done in the past. When Munday first took over, he started going to local businesses and youth fairs, asking for a couple hundred dollars.

"We went to any place that let us in," he said.

The university’s current success has helped efforts, though, and IWU now targets business people across the nation, and not just those affiliated with the Wesleyan church,
he said. The university also now uses a research department to target potential donors, which IWU had not done before.

The university's drive has shown itself in spending. In 1987, the college eked out $6 million for its budget. Today, it operates on $30 million.

But nowhere has growth been larger than in the College of Adult and Professional studies. The program, which started with about four degrees, now offers about 25. IWU operates centers all throughout Indiana plus in Kentucky and Ohio. The school is even looking to teach a course in China this summer, Hank Kelly, assistant vice president for planning and development, said.

The college has focused its growth on fitting the needs of non-traditional students, such as streamlining registration and looking to online courses.

"[Non-traditional students] needs are just very very different," said Sharon Drury, assistant dean of business programs. "We're taking the degrees to the people."

The school has used the same model for the past 20 years, Drury said.

Barnes admits he wasn't sure about IWU's take on adult studies.

"I was a bit of a traditionalist, so I was a bit of a skeptic," he said.

After watching the classes, which also use study groups to help the students learn the material, Barnes said he knew the program would work.

"Those students engage their studies with gusto," he said. "They're sacrificing to do this."

As the school grows, though, the school doesn't ignore older programs.
Mike Bonner, vice president of Colleges of Adult and Graduation Studies, said the college constantly reviews each program and tries to hire professors who are practicing in their field.

Bonner said he did not anticipate the school branching out into other states. However, that does not mean the growth will stop. Barnes expects enrollment to peak at about 25,000 students, he said.

IWU's growth has not been without problems, though. The university and the Marion community do not always see eye to eye, such as in the debate about whether Nebraska Street should be closed.

For instance, Dean Small, 37, who lives just north of campus on Nebraska Street, said he appreciates what the university does for the community but does not agree with the Marion City Council allowing IWU to close the part of the street that runs through campus.

"I'm for the growth, I'm for the expansion, but I think there are other ways to do it," Small said.

His main concerns are how it will affect businesses that rely on customers who use Nebraska Street to get to there and homeowners who also use the street frequently, he said.

Barnes maintains, though, that most people embrace the university and a small vocal minority just doesn't understand IWU's contributions.
"There are likely hundreds and hundreds of communities that would give their teeth to bring a university like us there," he said. "There are some [Marion residents] who are simply unable or unwilling to recognize what a jewel they have."

He claims that the institution put $80 million into the local economy during the past year, from student spending to conference visitors. He cites the 10,000 volunteer hours in the past year by students and professors with the local community as an indication of the university's worth.

The university also favors job applicants who are willing to move to Grant County, Drury said. Barnes estimates that about 100 employees have moved here after being hired.

The adult studies program is adding to that growth. While more centers open across the three states, the headquarters in Marion have to have a staff large enough to support them, Bonner said.

However, Morton Marcus, director emeritus of the Indiana Business Research Center at IUPUI, said Marion most likely never sees any of the money made by the adult education program because it goes directly to pay for teacher salaries and building rents.

The city also doesn't get the added benefit of student spending -- students enrolled at the Marion campus will shop and buy food, clothes and other items within the city.

However, the adult education program does help build the school's reputation and increases the school's visibility.

"Many, many, many of their locations are visible from the interstate," Marcus said. "It's like huge billboards."

The added advertisement will help draw traditional students to the main campus, he said.

Some Marion residents think the school's reputation can bring in more than students.
Jeff Southworth, president of the Grant County Economic Development Board, said he believes all the universities in Grant County help attract businesses.

"We see universities as a key drawing factor," he said. "We have embraced them."

The universities help increase the quality of the community and to diversify the economy, he said.

But does IWU need to do more to let residents know about how it affects the local economy?

Barnes said he doesn’t think the university needs to make more of an effort to get its message out to the community, although he does admit it’s not perfect.

"I don’t think there’s a communication problem with the city," he said. "Communication is a black hole — you never arrive."

Small said he does think the university could do more to welcome the community, though. He feels that most of the time the university does not listen to local resident’s concerns, he said.

Despite any town-and-gown problems, IWU remains focused on growth. The university would like to close three blocks that touch the university in order to provide for future building, Barnes said. It is also continuing to work on closing Nebraska Street, which Barnes said will improve student safety and the aesthetic beauty of the campus, which is one of the main persuading factors for visiting high school students.

With all of its successes, Barnes has reason to believe he met his original goal.

"It was not my intent to preside over a funeral."
Profile of a laid-off worker
Five years have passed since Jenn Corp. announced it would close and it started to lay off hundreds of employees, including Deborah Buckler.

Since then, Buckler, 44, managed to find work at American Woodmark and stay away from debt, but her economic situation is not what it once was. She makes less money for harder work, and she’s had to put her dream of buying a home and attending school on hold.

Buckler exemplifies how Grant County residents who lost their jobs because of plant closures are moving on economically and educationally, although perhaps with not as much money as before.

Buckler, a single mother of three, worked at Jenn Corp for two years before she lost her job. Her father had worked there for 40-some years and helped pave the way for her into the job.

She says the work as an extrusion assistant, helping to make rubber lining, was easy and just required her to start the line and pack the boxes as they were completed. At $12.55 an hour plus benefits, it also paid well and offered lots of overtime. She usually worked seven days a week, eight to 12 hours a day. Overtime pay was time-and-a-half on most days and double on Sundays.

At the time, she was helping her oldest daughter, Rebecca, pay for college, and putting her two younger children, Holly and David Wayne, through their private school, Lakeview Christian Academy.

She learned in March 2001 that she would lose her job that July.
“It was devastating,” she said. “I was quite upset because I was a single mom trying to put two kids through private school.”

She now makes $12.27 an hour at American Woodmark, almost what she made at Jenn Corp. Some of her financial burden has also eased now that her children have graduated from high school and she doesn’t have to pay for their tuition. She was also fortunate in that her father owns her home, so she just has to pay utilities, not rent.

However, the road to where she is now has not been easy and she still faces problems. Buckler originally thought she would have an easy time finding a new job and took her time, she said.

“I thought that by October I would have something — I really didn’t think it would be a big deal,” she said.

She ended up going more than 10 months without work and a year without health insurance. When she did finally start at American Woodmark, she took a pay cut to $7.50 an hour, $6 less than she made at Jenn Corp. And though the job does have benefits, it does not offer a 401K.

“That was a kick in the pants,” she said.

The work is also more labor-intensive. She puts components for cabinets onto carts, which requires lots of pulling of heavy materials, she said.

“I’m thankful for my job, but I do not like it,” she said. “It’s hard on the body.”

She was able to use her severance and vacation pay to help pay off some bills, but she could no longer afford to help her oldest daughter pay for college.

Education
Holly said she also felt the effect when she went to college. She was working 20 hours a week at Wal-Mart by the time she graduated from high school to support herself. Because she had made so much, she did not qualify for financial aid and had to drop out from Ball State University’s nursing program.

Holly continues to support herself along with taking classes at Ivy Tech State College. Even though she expects to give birth in August, she hopes to get into a nursing program in the fall and graduate in three years.

Buckler has also struggled to finish her education. Her children and parents encouraged Buckler, who has a high school degree but never took higher education classes, to enroll at Ivy Tech.

“That first class was just terrifying,” she said. “I was afraid I would be the oldest person in the classroom.”

At first she took whatever interested her, she said, including some computer courses because she had little experience with them. She decided she wanted to pursue one of the medical programs, although she wasn’t sure which one.

However, she cut back from two classes at a time to one to help care for her mother, who had become sick. She also misfiled her financial aid and lost it for a year. When she re-enrolled, she said, trying to balance her work at American Woodmark and her classes was becoming too much to handle and she wasn’t able to give enough time to her education.

“I’m the type of person if I’m going to take a class, I want to do well at it – I expect to get As,” she said.
She does want to finish her schooling, but she said her main goal right now is to help daughter Holly graduate, so she plans on helping take care of Holly's child when it's born.

Her family continues to support her, though. Buckler said her father continues to offer financial support for her schooling, and her children constantly ask her about it.

"My kids thought it was just so awesome their mom was going back to school," she said.

The future

She also stayed out of debt and loan trouble. She's not the only one, either. Local bankers say that, while no numbers are available, the general feel is that most residents who lost a job are staying out of debt.

Ed Merchant, president of Regions Bank in Marion, said enough time has passed that Marion and Grant County are starting to see recovery.

"I do see a rebound -- there's no question," he said.

Ralph Spencer, manager at Mutual Federal in Marion, also said signs at his bank point to a rebounding economy. Few, if any, people are still having trouble paying off loans, he said. He also pointed to increased loan activity as one of the positive signs.

"I'm not saying it's stellar by any stretch, but I think things are on an even keel," he said.

Merchant said people who remained in the area after the plants close still are probably underemployed and not making as much as they were, like Buckler.

And while the pay cuts might not sound like a great decrease, Merchant said, the cuts were large enough to have a substantial effect.
"Anyone thinking about taking a 25 percent decrease in pay, it's a lot when you're trying to feed a family," Merchant said.

However, they have managed to make economical gains.

Merchant said he has been working with an ex-Thomson employee who finished a degree and now is trying to start up a small business. He's also been helping some business partners to open a small business in downtown Marion.

Larger businesses that work with him have also started to hire more employees, he said.

"Those are all good sign in a healthy and rebounding economy," he said.

Buckler shares their positive attitude. She continues to keep her eye open for a house she can buy for herself. And while her education is on hold, she insists she will eventually finish it.

She has applied for a job at both the new Dollar General and Wal-Mart distribution centers, although she does feel secure at her job with American Woodmark, she said.

Her oldest daughter was able to stay in college and graduates with a masters degree in music from Missouri State University this spring while her son received financial aid to go to Ball State to study history. Buckler is also thankful that she did not have to move away from her family in order to find a new job.

Despite her lower wage and her problems with classes, Buckler said she feels her life is improving.

"Things are starting to look up."