

Movies take center stage

- ★ This year’s top movies definitely won’t cheer you up. Is it a sign of the times? **A&E | F1**
- ★ Our critics’ — and your own — picks for who will win and who should win the Oscars. **A&E | F1**
- ★ Joe Williams reports from Hollywood, and Gail Pennington and Debra Bass live-blog the show. **STLtoday.com/entertainment**

SUNDAY POST-DISPATCH

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INSIDE

PUTTING YOU INTO THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

YouTube website lets anyone into political debate — but can be heavy on spin, bias.



• Citizens as commentators
It's not just for CNN anchors — regular people are posting political commentaries, too. Miles Bateman posted this video of Obama's St. Louis rally.



• Speaking to the candidates
The CNN-YouTube debates allowed viewers to submit video questions online, which the candidates answered and debated on TV.



• Voices of support
Videos posted by supporters — such as those featuring Obama Girl and this one featuring will.i.am — allow candidates' messages to spread.



• Speaking to the people
Politicians can use YouTube to directly address the public. Missouri Gov. Matt Blunt used the site to announce he would not be seeking re-election.

By Adam Jadhav
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Hot bursts of light flashed across the Edward Jones Dome as Sen. Barack Obama walked the stage. Hundreds snapped pictures; others shot video from cell phones.

At least one man turned his back to Obama and delivered his own brief speech into a video camera in support of the Illinois Democrat. Miles Bateman, a retired Air Force master sergeant and Baptist minister from Trenton, in Clinton County, was about to become a political commentator by posting his video on the YouTube website.

Since its founding only three years ago, YouTube has prompted thousands of people such as Bateman to insert themselves into the democratic process.

Millions watch the most popular political videos, such as the one featuring a bikini-clad “Obama girl.” And politicians use the site as

PLEASE SEE **YOUTUBE** | **A 6**

Talk

STLtoday.com/current
Do you think YouTube has helped or hurt politics? Give your view in our Current Affairs forum.

More

STLtoday.com/politics
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Recession resilient

WHY WE MAY BE ABLE TO BOUNCE BACK FASTER THIS TIME AROUND



Jerry DeGreeff, a registered nurse at Barnes-Jewish Hospital, checks the blood pressure of Khamphao Chareunsap during the check-in procedure in the clinic. DeGreeff formerly was a sales representative for a steel company. Emily Rasinski | Post-Dispatch

St. Louis has largely retreated from manufacturing jobs — and their uncertainty.

By Tim Logan
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Two recessions ago, in 1990, St. Louis was still something of a manufacturing hub.

Today, that's not the case.

And if our economy is tipping into a recession once again, that may actually be a good thing.

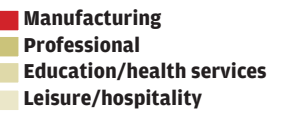
Make no mistake, experts say, a downturn here would be hard, and painful for those who lose their jobs. But it may be shorter and less severe than past recessions, in part because St. Louis is less reliant on the fickle business of making things such as cars, airplanes and steel.

For decades, St. Louis has been following the national trend out of manufacturing toward a more service-based economy. Health care, education and financial services have replaced manufacturing and warehousing as top industries. The biggest employers are smaller now.

A CHANGING MIX

Since the start of the recession in the early 90's, the proportion of St. Louisans who work in manufacturing has dropped sharply. Those jobs have shifted into education, health care and professional services.

Top St. Louis industries



SOURCE: St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank
Post-Dispatch

Workers are more adaptable.

If anything, that process has happened more quickly here than in other places. Through the '60s, '70s and '80s, St. Louis had more manufacturing jobs per capita than most of the rest of the country. Today, with one in 10 working St. Louisans in manufacturing, heavy industry here is actually a bit smaller than the national average.

That's the result of a long run of painful layoffs, in which giant local employers such as McDonnell Douglas, Ford and Chrysler would shed good-paying jobs by the thousands in lean years, jobs they often didn't bring back when times were good.

When the economy slows down, manufacturing tends to get hit the hardest, said Howard Wall, an economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

PLEASE SEE **ECONOMY** | **A 7**

Talk **STLtoday.com/current** • How well is the local economy positioned to withstand tough times? Talk about it in Current Affairs.

VASHON RECRUITING

Early complaints over transfer but no action

Athletic directors from Alton, other schools met with activities association almost six years ago.

By David Hunn
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

ALTON • Almost six years ago, Alton High School laid out a complaint to the Missouri State High School Activities Association.

Two promising Alton stars, Bobby and Johnny Hill, had just transferred to Vashon High School, coach Floyd Irons' basketball powerhouse in St. Louis.

Vashon sent the transfer records to Alton. But Alton's athletic director, Mike Brey, and assistant director, Mike Bellm, thought something looked strange. The records, they said, listed Johnny, Bobby and their father as apartment residents.

But the lease itself was in someone else's name, they said. It seemed like somebody was paying the Hills' rent.

So that fall day in 2002, Brey and Bellm sat down with Becky Oakes, then the director of the state activities association.

Oakes said she was gathering facts, Brey and Bellm recall. She had just come, on that same day, from a similar session with athletic directors from across north St. Louis County, who complained about their own players defecting to Vashon. The two meetings together

PLEASE SEE **IRONs** | **A 10**



Floyd Irons



Johnny Hill



Bobby Hill

In Metro

Adults, not the young basketball players, should bear the blame, Floyd Irons tells columnist Sylvester Brown.

SILENT SCHOOLS



When Hempstead Elementary School closed five years ago, something died in the Hamilton Heights neighborhood. St. Louis has closed 25 other schools in the last five years and expects to close eight more this year. Those neighborhoods are likely to suffer, too.

NewsWatch | **B1**

Web zingers



Time's running out

Students in Missouri have a few weeks to apply for state grants and some other forms of financial help to pay for college next fall.

Business Sunday | **E3**

Surfing — in Ireland?

Believe it or not, Ireland's breathtaking coasts and world-class waves have made the island a star in the world of surfing and wind-surfing.

Explore | **T1**

Enter our Oscar contest

Before they hand out the gold statuettes Sunday night, put all of your movie knowledge to work and enter our Oscar contest online.

STLtoday.com/movies



ECONOMY | FROM A1

More jobs in service weather a downturn

“Across the country, the tendency to have a recession is higher the more manufacturing you have,” he said. “Manufacturing is just very sensitive to any downturns.”

That’s because when cash and confidence dry up, people stop buying things, especially big, expensive things such as cars and appliances, and companies put off the purchase of new machinery.

But people still go to the hospital and to school. They still eat and travel and seek financial advice. Those services can’t be provided from China, and they’re less likely to go away in a downturn. So, increasingly, that’s where the jobs are.

SEARCH FOR STABILITY

Jerry DeGreef knows that firsthand.

In the late 1980s, he was a steel pipe salesman. Business was not so good, he says.

“Things started slowing down and slowing down,” he said. “We don’t make much in this country any more. I decided I needed to get into something more stable.”

He knew some nurses, and he liked the flexibility the job offered, so at 37 he went back to school. It was hard, he said, and tough to pay the bills with three kids. And when he got done, the nursing job market was “kind of iffy.”

But he found a job and he liked it, and within a few years there was a nursing shortage. It was a good time to be a nurse.

Today he works at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and spends his days helping people heal. He likes that. He also feels more secure in his job than he did selling pipe.

“Just look around,” DeGreef said. “The hospitals are building. They’re not closing down.”

But that transition can be hard for some, says Gordon Douglas. He runs the Missouri Career Center in south St. Louis County, which gives him a front-row seat for the sea change under way in the region’s economy.

He spends a lot of time with workers laid off by Ford or Chrysler who are trying to find a new career. It’s tough, he said, because an auto-plant worker may be very well skilled at a few particular things but lack the broader training it takes to adapt to jobs for growing industries.

“If all you know how to do is use an air gun to put on a wheel, well, there just aren’t that many



Iris Watson thought her manufacturing career was secure. Then, she found herself jobless. “I had two choices: sit around and mope and groan, or I could get out and do something else, and I did,” she said Thursday as she studied for a test at her home in University City. Watson is enrolled in the Barnes-Jewish School of Nursing. Erik M. Lunsford | Post-Dispatch



Jerry DeGreef, a registered nurse at Barnes-Jewish Hospital, said he feels more secure in his nursing job than he did selling pipe. “Just look around,” DeGreef said. “The hospitals are building. They’re not closing down.” Emily Rasinski | Post-Dispatch

jobs out there,” he said. “Most of the manufacturing people don’t seem to have the office skills they need.”

Knowing your way around a computer is essential just to apply for most jobs now, he notes. And familiarity with an office setting makes you better able to work in a variety of sectors, more employable if you lose a job.

Even the factory jobs that are out there aren’t what they used to be, says Jim Smith. He took early retirement from Chrysler in June after 34 years at the plant in Fenton. Over that time, he endured a pair of three-year layoffs, but he earned a good wage, pension and benefits as a line worker and then officer for the plant’s United Auto Workers local. As Chrysler kept getting “leaner,” he saw what was on the way, and

he got out.

“I knew a change was coming,” he said. “And I knew I couldn’t stop it.”

Now he works part time for the Valley Park School District, driving a bus and doing maintenance. With his pension and his wife’s job at Maryville University, they do all right.

“Though I do have to pinch my pennies,” Smith said.

The next generation of auto workers won’t be so lucky, he predicts. More and more plant work is being outsourced to subcontractors. The pay scale is lower. The unions have “priced ourselves out of business,” he said, and can’t protect their members anymore. And so many jobs have gone overseas.

Of his five children, none works in manufacturing.

EDUCATION IS THE KEY

But it’s not that there aren’t manufacturing jobs, notes Mike George, director of career services at St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley. It’s just that there are fewer, and they require more skills.

“We still have companies that make things here,” he said. “They’re just smaller and more customized.”

That means more education. In the long run, that’s probably a good thing, said Russ Signorino, a labor market analyst at the United Way of Greater St. Louis. Today many parents try to send their children to college, not the factory, and if those children lose a job, their professional skills tend to be more transferable than what they would have learned on the line.

“In general, people today are better prepared to transition into new jobs, new careers,” he said. “But it’s not like this came easy.”

Yet many of those “new economy” jobs, especially the ones that don’t require advanced training, just don’t pay as well as the old ones.

“People can go out and find a job tomorrow, most of them,” said Douglas. “But you’re talking \$10 an hour.”

Indeed, some of the fastest-growing sectors of the region’s economy in recent years have been in lower-wage industries such as retail, hotels and restaurants rather than in factory work.

As St. Louis has shed thousands of manufacturing jobs in the last 15 years, it has added

thousands of casino jobs. One of the biggest hirers Douglas has seen lately was the new Lumière Place casino complex in downtown St. Louis, which opened in December with more than 1,000 employees.

“That seems to be the trend where jobs are going,” he said. “And they’re just not paying as well as the old manufacturing jobs.”

Still, there are bright spots. Many of the region’s fastest-growing companies didn’t exist in 1990. They’re adding good jobs even as factories subtract them, and they’re often less susceptible to a recession.

“Those companies are the future of St. Louis,” Signorino said.

And there are people making the transition from old-line jobs to more stable new ones in education or health care, people such as Iris Watson.

Watson, of University City, worked for 16 years at Procter & Gamble in north St. Louis, driving a forklift, working in the storeroom, standing on the packing line. It was a solid union job, with good pay and the flexibility she needed to raise her children as a single mom, she said. She had seniority. She was planning to retire there.

But in 2004, P&G offered her a buyout — “the kind of buyout that you have to take,” she said. And so in her late 40s, Watson was out of work.

“In the beginning it’s hard,” she said. “You’re middle-aged and you don’t know what’s going to happen. You apply for different jobs and it’s, ‘No, no.’ And it

CHANGE AT THE TOP

Some of the region’s biggest employers in 1990 — like May Co. and TWA — are gone. Others, such as McDonnell Douglas and Southwestern Bell, have been bought and their local work force has shrunk considerably. Healthcare institutions and universities have grown.

Total nonfarm employment

1990		
Industry		Work force
1. McDonnell Douglas Corp.		40,500
2. Southwestern Bell		12,119
3. Schnuck Markets Inc.		12,000
4. Scott Air Force Base		11,767
5. U.S. Postal Service		11,503
6. May Co.		11,400
7. Trans World Airlines		8,507
8. Washington University		7,518
9. Chrysler Corp.		7,181
10. National Super Markets		7,000

2001		
Industry		Work force
1. BJC Healthcare		19,033
2. Boeing Co.		16,400
3. Scott Air Force Base		13,000
4. Schnuck Markets Inc.		12,393
5. McDonald’s		11,000
6. Wal-Mart Stores		10,800
7. SSM Health Care		10,664
8. Southwestern Bell		10,632
9. Washington University		10,255
10. Unity Health System		10,066

2007		
Industry		Work force
1. BJC Healthcare		23,001
2. Boeing Co.		16,000
3. Scott Air Force Base		13,331
4. U.S. Postal Service		13,304
5. Wal-Mart Stores		13,005
6. SSM Health Care		12,582
7. Washington University		12,423
8. Schnuck Markets Inc.		10,700
9. AT&T		9,442
10. McDonald’s		8,000

SOURCE: United Way of Greater St. Louis | Post-Dispatch

ain’t because you don’t have the experience.”

So she took a chance and went back to school, for nursing. It was something she had always wanted to do, she said, and a job she can keep as she gets older. And it’s a growth industry.

“I just went ahead and did it,” she said.

Four years later, Watson is a student at Barnes-Jewish College of Nursing. She’s had to scrimp a bit these last few years and can’t do as much for her grandkids as she’d like right now.

But even as the economy appears headed for a recession, she’s getting ready to start a new job. Next month, she’ll begin picking up shifts at the hospital. She’s looking forward to it.

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YOUTUBE | FROM A1

Website lets anyone into the political debate

“a new tool to do something they’ve always sought to do: reach voters without the filter of the media.”

Witness Missouri Gov. Matt Blunt, who shocked the state’s political establishment by announcing he wasn’t seeking a second term — via YouTube video.

But as it becomes a permanent part of the political landscape, YouTube has sparked debate over its impact. Some complain that images of models prancing around in bathing suits fail to lift the national discourse.

On YouTube and elsewhere in the anything-goes world of the Internet, some argue, facts easily give way to emotion, artistic license or outright deception. Others point out that YouTube leaves out millions who can’t afford the broadband Internet access it requires.

But all agree: YouTube has become a lasting, and significant, part of the political process.

Some observers credit YouTube with fostering an evolving phenomenon they call net-roots politics. Political campaigns have hurried to take advantage.

“We had to have staff watching YouTube pretty much all the time,” recalls Paul Maslin, a pollster and strategist for the now-defunct presidential campaign of New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, a Democrat. “You’re now at the point where every campaign is thinking about the new media when they make a move.”

NOT JUST ANOTHER TV

The presidential candidates have their own “channels” of YouTube videos from stump speeches, television ads and interviews. Minutes after the end of a debate of the Democratic candidates Thursday night in Austin, Texas, for example, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton’s campaign had posted video of some of her comments.

Obama’s campaign last week had posted almost 700 videos; Clinton, D-N.Y., had almost 250; former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, a Republican, just under 200; Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., about 170; Rep. Ron Paul, R-Texas, about 125.

Ultimately, viewers decide what is important or interesting. Most political videos come from users simply posting raw footage. Some add titles or voice-overs. Others spout off right into the camera, as Bateman did at the Obama rally on Feb. 2 (though his voice is overwhelmed by background noise).

Eric Robert, a senior in business administration at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, posted uncut footage from the visit of Huckabee to a hotel in west St. Louis County late last month.

“I really do feel that whenever normal people get an opportunity to witness an event, it’s kind of like our duty to record it and share it with other people,” said Robert, whose previous YouTube postings were apolitical, including a Dutch child singer and someone playing a video game.

YouTube allows users to interact with each other and take part in wide-ranging debates, sharing whatever is important to them, essentially making the programming decisions.

“Anybody can create the show,” said John Palfrey, executive director of Harvard’s Berkman Center for Internet & Society. “You remix content very

quickly. You can take video of Barack Obama on the campaign trail and remix it into something that has power.”

That’s exactly what music star will.i.am did in his “Yes We Can” video, where a cast of celebrities recites an Obama speech over a soul music soundtrack. The clip has been seen more than 14 million times in various posts on YouTube and will.i.am’s site.

That’s approaching the viewership for a new episode of ABC’s “Lost,” and it’s more than watch “60 Minutes” on CBS.

“It’s really historic,” said Ben Relles, 32, the creator of “Obama Girl,” who got his MBA from Penn’s Wharton School of Business. “It definitely increases political interest. We get hundreds of e-mails practically every day.”

WHAT’S IT WORTH?

But do such videos really add anything to a democratic society?

“YouTube and other new media outlets give a whole lot more openings to citizens. And that, to me, is good,” said Pam Johnson, executive director of the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute at the University of Missouri. “On the other hand, it also means that the citizens may have to work a little harder because they may be getting interesting information, but there is still a step you have to go through and synthesize.”

Johnson said YouTube would become an even bigger player

in politics if it teamed up with a mainstream media partner such as a newspaper or television network skilled at exactly what YouTube lacks: analysis and context.

“Sometimes we just have to fill in the middle there,” said Johnson, whose institute studies ways to bring journalists closer to citizens.

Palfrey agrees that a “balanced media diet” includes mainstream media as well as new media. But he defended YouTube’s value.

“This is another medium through which people have discourse that is sometimes serious, sometimes amusing,” he said. “I think you would be hard-pressed to say the ‘Yes We Can’ video is not a serious and real take on issues.”

The videos aren’t just watched. YouTube encourages people to comment on what they see and to link the videos to other websites. Palfrey said that kind of sharing of messages helped fuel political movements.

“There is so much interactivity,” said Michael Cheney, a senior fellow at the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois. “YouTube has changed politics in that way. And it’s changed it forever.”

LET THE USER BEWARE

With the good comes danger, for voters as well as candidates.

Users have few constraints in editing and posting content,

meaning spin and bias abound. Web search capabilities increase the possibility that “you could be listening to only the things that you want to hear,” Palfrey acknowledged.

And political campaigns wrestle with the fear of such unbredled commentary and the ease of posting video.

“You’ve got people who can record you at the most inopportune moment and then put it out there on the Web,” said Maslin, the strategist for Richardson.

Even as YouTube brings in new, mostly younger voices, it does leave some out. Karlo Barrios Marcelo, a researcher with the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement, notes that the most disengaged demographic in politics — young adults who aren’t in college — are also far less likely to have regular and high-speed

Internet access.

“Almost every time that the campaigns focus on young people, usually they’re talking about the people that we don’t really need to worry about,” Marcelo said. Young people not in college “are not going to be like full-time college students who are wired and sitting in their dorm or professionals sitting at their computer in a cubicle.”

Despite the naysayers, YouTube insists that it makes politics more accessible.

“It levels the playing field for discussion,” said Aaron Ferstman, spokesman for YouTube’s politics team. “With YouTube, anybody that has an opinion can sort of vocalize it and potentially get heard by a wide audience of people.”

Jake Wagman of the Post-Dispatch contributed to this report.

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