

# Livonia firm typical of 'rebound' — Blanchard

By Teri Banas  
staff writer

Michigan is once again "a good place to do business." Record numbers of new business start-ups provide evidence that general recovery is in progress, announced Gov. James Blanchard this week in Livonia.

Preliminary figures from the state Commerce Department show that while 5,000 businesses shut their doors in Michigan last year, an estimated 23,600 opened. That was up 12 percent from the previous year, said state officials.

Calling 1985 a "banner year" in new business incorporations, Blanchard said that the high rate of recent years is "one of the best indicators of economic growth we have."

He cited a report from the prestigious Wall Street brokerage house, Dun and Bradstreet, placing Michigan third nationwide in new business start-ups in 1985.

"It's concrete evidence of our rebounding economy, our business climate, where you have more than 23,000 new businesses willing their money in Michigan and take risks in Michigan," he said.

THE GOVERNOR'S promotional stop in the heart of Livonia's industrial belt was made Monday at Indata Corp., a small three-month-old data processing firm

owned by Canton Township residents Greg and Cathryn Lavigne.

Blanchard praised the couple and called them "classic examples of what entrepreneur activity is all about."

The Lavignes, who employ five data processors, were selected to typify most new start-ups today. Blanchard said that state research indicates that two-thirds of all new jobs in the United States are created by companies with fewer than 20 people. And 80 percent of replacement jobs are produced by businesses with fewer than 100 workers, he said.

"(Small businesses) are much more important to our economy than perhaps people who work for Ford or Chrysler can realize," he said.

"Greg and Cathryn Lavigne are classic examples of what entrepreneur activity is all about," Blanchard said.

According to Blanchard, Michigan business is in transition from a "smoke stack" industry to high technology and advanced manufacturing, along with "robotics-powered, computer drive" business.

Though such industries employ fewer workers, they are more recession-proof and jobs are "more secure," he said.

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facturing's emerging emphasis in the state's economy was the location of Monday's stop, in the midst of the so-called "Automation Alley," stretch from Rochester Hills across Oakland and western Wayne counties to Ann Arbor.

According to Blanchard and state Commerce Director Doug Ross, the highest number of new business starts was found in Oakland County, with the counties of Washtenaw, Wayne and Macomb above the state average.

Blanchard said that reductions in the single business tax last year encouraged new business start-ups.

Recognizing it as an improvement, chamber director John White said, however, "some businesses in Livonia still feel it's too high."

According to White, the improved business economy is bringing more people into this area. Citing figures supplied by a local real estate firm, White said business people moving into the area are "gobbling up" residential property. There were only 12 available homes listed for sale in the 36-square-mile city recently, he said.

Blanchard praised the city of Livonia for "working very hard" to improve the business climate in the state, and cited its recent successes in "Project Legacy."



Commerce Director Doug Ross (left) shows Gov. Blanchard the increase in new businesses in the state.

JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

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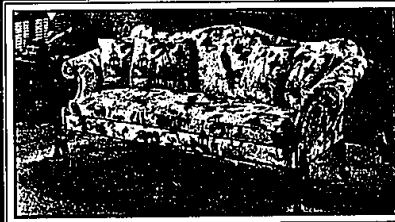


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