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### **EDITORIAL: A lift for the region: Plastic surgeons in a changing economy**

Jul. 11 -- How much has the economic landscape of Akron and Northeast Ohio changed? The measures are many. Economists point to their charts, graphs and files full of statistics. Foundations cite their donor lists. Employers and employees tell their own stories. Even the Defy Gravity gala for the Akron Art Museum proved revealing.

The leading sponsor for the party? In another day, it might have been a tire company or another manufacturing firm. In this case, Akron Plastic Surgeons led the way, Dr. John Pederson taking the stage on Saturday evening to welcome the guests and celebrate the new building.

Obviously, the role of the medical practice in the gala involved more than sheer economics. Good corporate citizenship matters. Still, the symbolism is hard to resist. After all, the service economy involves more than Wal-Mart and fast-food outlets. It includes financial advisers, insurance agents, educators, lawyers, nurses and doctors.

The moment echoed an economic fact of life, highlighted not too long ago by a Business Week cover story: "What's really propping up the economy? Health care has added 1.7 million jobs since 2001. The rest of the private sector? None." Not surprisingly, the trend holds in this region, health care expanding as the population ages, adding a certain resonance to the applause for the plastic surgeons.