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Huntington Economist Expects Strong Rise In Manufacturing Employment in 2011

Biggest Economic Risk is Rising Oil Prices

COLUMBUS, Ohio, April 7, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- Robust manufacturing job growth is expected this year with more than 102,000 manufacturing jobs already added in the first quarter, according to a U.S. economic forecast released by George Mokrzan, senior economist for Huntington (NASDAQ: HBAN; www.huntington.com).

"We have seen the strongest overall growth in manufacturing since 2004," said Mokrzan. "This year, we have also seen the largest increase in manufacturing jobs since the early 1970s."

However, the U.S. economy remains vulnerable to geopolitical factors, such as rising oil prices, political unrest in the Middle East and the ongoing crisis in Japan.

"The biggest risk to U.S. economic growth is the supply of crude oil from the Middle East. Although our economy can withstand moderate price increases, large supply cuts would likely lead to a sharp economic slowdown," Mokrzan said. "The crisis in Japan also will have an impact – the extent of which can't truly be measured yet. Critical infrastructure has been damaged, private capital stock has been reduced and thousands of lives have been lost."

The following are additional highlights from Mokrzan's forecast:

- Slow-Down in Japan -Worldwide economic growth is expected to be slower this year because of Japan's earthquake/tsunami crisis. In particular, Japan, the third largest economy in the world, was a premier producer of manufactured products. This will impact supply chains worldwide.

- More exports -Export growth will likely continue to drive economic expansion, even with logistical issues in Japan. In January, exports to Japan represented only 4.7% of the U.S.'s total exports.

- Stabilizing U.S. dollar -The U.S. dollar should get stronger against major currencies later this year, thanks to improved economic growth and eventual monetary policy tightening.

Visit HuntingtonFunds.com to review Mokrzan's complete forecast. It includes detailed information on key economic indicators and factors that may affect economic growth.

About George Mokrzan

For more than a decade, George Mokrzan has provided economic analysis and forecasting for Huntington Bancshares Incorporated. He has accurately forecasted many upturns and downturns in the economy since the late 1990s, including the current recovery. As far back as late 2005 and early 2006, he was one of the few economists who accurately predicted the national housing correction, and the cyclical slowdown in the economy that it fostered.

Mokrzan earned his doctorate in macroeconomics, international economics and econometrics from Duke University in 1990. He earned a master's degree in economics from Duke University and a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Rochester.

About Huntington

Huntington Bancshares Incorporated is a \$54 billion regional bank holding company headquartered in Columbus, Ohio. Founded in 1866, it provides full-service commercial, small business, and consumer banking services; mortgage banking services; treasury management and foreign exchange services; equipment leasing; wealth and investment management services; trust services; brokerage services; customized insurance brokerage and service programs; and other financial product and services. The principal markets for these services are Huntington's six-state banking franchise: Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Indiana, West Virginia, and Kentucky. The primary distribution channels include a banking network of over 600 traditional branches and convenience branches located in grocery stores and retirement centers, and through an array of alternative distribution channels including internet and mobile banking, telephone banking, and over 1,300 ATMs. Through automotive dealership relationships within its six-state banking franchise area and selected New England states, Huntington also provides commercial banking services to the automotive dealers and retail automobile financing for dealer customers.

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