



Auer Growth Fund, other Hoosier mutual funds, build on strong 2009 performances

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The year is young, but locally based Auer Growth Fund got off to a good start. On Jan. 11, it briefly held first place among all U.S. small-cap blended mutual funds tracked by Morningstar Inc., with a 6.21-percent year-to-date total return.



Auer

“Friends, it’s not a big deal because the year is still so new, but when I went to check out our fund in the Morningstar year-to-date for our category (which was against 635 funds), we just slid into number one for 2010,” Auer Senior Portfolio Manager Robert Auer wrote in an e-mail to clients. “The bad thing is, we have to work harder now, [be]cause we have nowhere to go but to drop.”

The Auer fund’s Morningstar rank has since slipped a few places. At IBJ press time, it was number 16 in its category, with a 3.34-percent year-to-date total return. Launched in late 2007, the Auer fund now has \$184.4 million in assets under management. It closed 2009 with a 36.5-percent return—a sharp improvement from the 53.3-percent loss it suffered in 2008.

Indiana has just two other locally based mutual funds. Auer’s is by far the biggest. But both its Hoosier counterparts enjoyed strong performances last year.

Founded in 1998, Columbus-based Kirr Marbach Partners Value Fund has \$26.6 million in assets under management. It closed 2009 with a 37.6-percent return, according to Morningstar, compared with a 44.9-percent loss in 2008. Year-to-date, the Kirr fund is up 3.07 percent.

The locally based Archer Balanced Fund, launched in 2005, now has \$13.2 million in assets under management. It closed 2009 with a 15.7-percent return, according to Morningstar, compared with a 25.7-percent loss in 2008. Year-to-date, the Archer fund is up 1.4 percent.