



## HOW WOULD YOU INVEST A SPARE \$50,000?

By Jeff Harrington | *Times Staff Writer*

**F**orget the frugal investor. Set aside, for argument's sake, the typical personal finance rules of being safe and steady. That may be the wisest course. But face it: CDs and U.S. Treasury bonds are boring and their yields are practically nil.

In hope of finding bright spots in this dim economy, we asked a smattering of investment pros their advice on the best-performing short-term (one-year) and long-term (five-year) investments. Say you have \$50,000 to spend in the new year and accept a moderate to high level of risk. Where should you put your cash in 2011 to get the maximum return?

Some were more reluctant than others to embrace risk, citing the cautious nature of their personal and corporate strategies. And nearly all stressed the need to be flexible if market conditions abruptly change. "If you're buying something based on a forecast, sometimes you could be deadly wrong," warns Steve Athanassie of Trademark Capital.

Moreover, no neophyte should try this exercise without professional help. "It's an absolute minefield out there today," said Robert Gries, manager of Gries Investment Funds. "If you don't know what you're doing, you'll get your clock cleaned immediately."

### JAMES CORDIER,



*president and head trader of Liberty Trading Group, a Tampa commodities trader*

**M**ajor commodities were among the biggest winners of 2010, rising more than 50 percent.

"Short-term, over one year, I think they still have a lot of room to run, believe it or not," Cordier says.

One big reason is the emerging middle class in China.

"A billion people just entered the middle class. That's no bubble - that's the real thing," Cordier said. "The average Chinese citizen bought their first pair of blue jeans a year ago. ... They're driving more cars. They're eating better."

Hence, two of Cordier's preferred commodities over the next one to three years are oil and soybeans. In the first case, he sees demand overseas and a recovering U.S. economy pushing gas prices to \$4 by the spring. In the second case, he sees swelling global demand - in China in particular - for more protein-rich diets, boosting soybean prices.

Luxury food commodities like cocoa and sugar may not lead the markets, but they should also be part of one's investment portfolio, he suggests.

Given the uncertainty of the global economy, Cordier declined to speculate on the best bang for your buck five years out. "In five years, we could be in the greatest depression ever," he said, "or in the roaring 2010s."