

## Where Do We Rank Regarding Well-being?

When it comes to life expectancy, education and wealth, the United States holds its own compared to 168 other countries, according to a human development report published by the United Nations Development Programme.

An index summarizing the findings places Norway in the No. 1 spot. Rounding out the top five: Australia (No. 2), New Zealand (No. 3), the United States (No. 4) and Ireland (No. 5).

*The Economist* magazine produced its own index by combining the above data with information from a similar

report (published by the American Human Development Project) featuring domestic metrics. Given the substantial economies and populations of several U.S. states (in contrast to many countries), *The Economist* explored how rankings would change if select states were considered to be individual countries.

Standouts, in order of ranking, include Norway, Germany, Connecticut, New York, Sweden, Wyoming, California, Illinois, Florida and Australia.

### Insurance Firm Introduces HR Consulting Division

Leadership coaching and training initiatives are not the first things that come to mind when thinking about an insurance company. They are two of the services Indianapolis-based property/casualty and employee benefit agency MJ Insurance is offering, however, through its newly formed HR consulting practice.

MJ Insurance serves a variety of industries ranging from construction and coal mining to manufacturing and transportation.

Several factors led to the expansion, according to president and COO Jon Loftin, including health care reform and increasingly overwhelmed HR professionals.

“At the end of the day, the driving factor is that in the agency and brokerage world we live in, the days of being merely an access to an insurance marketplace are long behind us,” he contends.

Leading the proverbial charge as director of HR consulting is industry veteran Mellissa Boggs.

She says HR compliance is “a big balancing act.”

“There’s been a lot of requests for the HR audit,” she shares. (It gives clients) “peace of mind, that, ‘I know I’m in compliance, but I also know that I’m hoping to grow my culture the way I want it to be.’ That’s really important.”

Loftin concludes, “It’s a seamless integration into what we do. We were already providing consulting on a lot of things before Mellissa joined us. Now, we brought on someone with 20 years of experience, which brings (our expertise) to a whole new level.”

**Resources: Jon Loftin and Mellissa Boggs, MJ Insurance, at [www.mjinsurance.com](http://www.mjinsurance.com)**

### Automotive Alliance Gaining Traction

The love affair between Indiana and the automotive industry has clearly evolved over the years. One geographic area is hoping to take advantage of the past (and present) as mayors Greg Goodnight (Kokomo) and Wayne Seybold (Marion) have launched the Midwest Automotive Loop initiative to attract additional automotive investment and generate jobs.

“What we’re really trying to do is create a formal regional partnership that would promote all of our communities’ assets, strengths and resources, and give us a designation,” Goodnight explains.

“When we were meeting with representatives in China (as part of Gov. Mitch Daniels’ trade mission in December), it was hard for them to maybe find Kokomo or Marion on a map. So, we thought if we could give some specific recognition to this area, it might enable us to talk about what we have to offer and separate us from other areas.”

One advantage is proximity to a variety of higher education institutions. Among them are Indiana Wesleyan University, Indiana University-Kokomo, Purdue University College of Technology and two Ivy Tech Community College campuses.

Goodnight asserts, “Especially with Ivy Tech, they’re very flexible about accommodating any workforce – whether it be high-tech or light manufacturing, or any type of re-training. We want to make sure they’re (all local postsecondary education providers) at the table so if there are resources an employer may need, they have easy access to those chancellors and their campuses.”

**Resources: City of Kokomo at [www.cityofkokomo.org](http://www.cityofkokomo.org)  
City of Marion at [www.marionindiana.us](http://www.marionindiana.us)**



Mayors Wayne Seybold (Marion, left) and Greg Goodnight (Kokomo) hope the Midwest Automotive Loop brings additional business investments to the region.

## It Pays (Literally) to Implement Electronic Records

**P**aper-based recordkeeping (picture manila folders and bulky filing cabinets) may eventually go the way of house calls – once the norm, but now a rarity.

Many physicians and hospitals have begun transitioning to Electronic Health Records (EHRs), which can enhance patient care and improve efficiency. Others have struggled to adopt the technology due to steep implementation costs. New financial incentives are helping them make the switch, which federal law requires all health providers to do by 2015.

The incentives apply to eligible providers with Medicare and Medicaid patients. Each must demonstrate “meaningful use” (based on a set of national objectives such as increased patient engagement, reduction of racial disparities and better coordination of care) of certified EHR technology in order to receive funding.

Andrew VanZee, statewide health IT director at the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, distinguishes between the programs: “Under Medicare, the incentive amount

is 75% of the physician’s Medicare-allowed charges for the year, up to a maximum of \$44,000 (over five years). Under Medicaid, it is 85% of the physician’s Medicaid-allowed charges, up to \$63,750 per year (spanning six years).”

Indiana Medicaid awarded its first incentive payment to a Fort Wayne physician in May. In June, the Indiana Health Information Technology Extension Center (I-HITEC) – managed by Purdue University – named 41 providers “Indiana EHR MUvers” for meeting (or anticipating meeting) the June 30 deadline.

“I think overall, this is going to mean several hundred million dollars in investment back into the state of Indiana,” VanZee emphasizes.

**Resources: Andrew VanZee, Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, at [www.in.gov/fssa](http://www.in.gov/fssa)**

**Indiana Health Information Technology Extension Center at [www.ihitec.purdue.edu](http://www.ihitec.purdue.edu)**

## Underserved Areas Reign in Real Estate Deals

**Y**ou’re an entrepreneur trying to set up shop in a low-income community, hoping to create jobs and spur revitalization. But, you’re struggling to secure start-up capital because potential investors see the proposition as too risky. What do you do?

Paul Jones, partner at Indiana-based law firm Ice Miller, points to an often-overlooked tool: the New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC).

Here’s how it works: Community Development Entities (CDEs) compete for federal tax allocations, which can provide businesses with below-market equity financing and favorable terms on their loans. After receiving NMTC allocations (\$3.5 billion was available during the 2011 round of competition), CDEs obtain investors.

“Typically, investors are large profitable banks with a sizeable federal income tax liability,” Jones notes. “That’s who wants federal tax credits because they want to offset that tax liability.” While the NMTC program can bridge funding gaps, it’s only one piece of the financing puzzle.

“The easy thing to answer is, ‘Do you qualify?’ The next step is, ‘How do I go about accessing (funding)?’ and that’s a much more complicated process because you have to find a CDE that has the allocation, you need to find an investor who will receive the tax credits and you must have some other funding source,” Jones stresses.

Local projects range from commercial and retail office settings to community centers, manufacturing facilities and more. Allocations have taken place in Fort Wayne (\$15 million), Indianapolis (\$32 million) and French Lick (\$50 million) among other statewide locations.

**Resource: Paul Jones, Ice Miller, at [www.icemiller.com](http://www.icemiller.com)**

Shorts written by Symone C. Skrzycki

## New Wind Turbines Defy Need for Speed

**T**hey’re small, but mighty.

That’s an apt description for TurboMill™ micro-wind turbines – low-cost and highly efficient devices that generate small-scale wind energy in urban environments.

“They’re designed so that there are three in a base unit, so you don’t have to have a huge, tall device,” comments Dan Bates, president and CEO of New Albany-based WindStream Technologies. “You can have a smaller, lower profile device on your rooftop and because you have three of them, you gain efficiency. It’s what we call a personal wind farm.”



**The U.S. Embassy in Finland installed four TurboMill micro-wind turbines in March as part of a global energy efficiency program.**

WindStream was established in California in 2008 and launched research and development operations in the Purdue Research Park the following year. Now, plans are underway for a new assembly facility in North Vernon.

“We’ll bring 100 jobs to the area,” Bates declares. “We have business we’re doing in Brazil, Mexico, Norway, Scandinavia – all over.”

**Resource: Dan Bates, WindStream Technologies, at [www.windstream-inc.com](http://www.windstream-inc.com)**