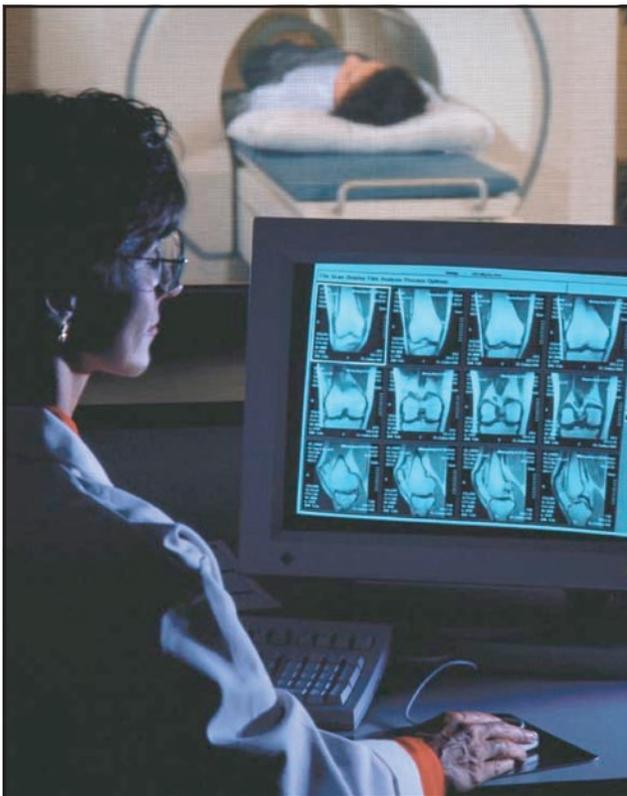


# Part of the Mix

## Smaller Communities Earn Spots in National Report

By Candace Gwaltney

Michigan City-based company RPS Imaging is a supplier and service provider of radiology equipment used by doctors, veterinarians and chiropractors. The industry's changing technology has shifted from X-ray films to digital imaging.



Indianapolis and Bloomington have company. They're not the only places Indiana life sciences companies are calling home.

While a large concentration of Indiana life sciences businesses resides in those cities, others also gained notoriety when the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) and innovation-focused Battelle released a report in June detailing the bioscience job market. The report looked at employment and growth trends at the city, state and national levels. Muncie and Michigan City/LaPorte both ranked as metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) offering bioscience jobs in smaller cities.

"You don't have to be an organization in Central Indiana to be successful," notes Mike Brooks, president and CEO of the Indiana Health Industry Forum.

The Forum recently identified 1,571 life sciences companies throughout the state. While nearly half of those are in Central Indiana, Brooks points out that each region of the state has a life sciences presence.

The organization mapped out the state's companies to identify each region's strengths and identify ways the industry could grow more in both small and large communities, Brooks explains.

He urges not to discount small, local hospitals from the life sciences lists. Hospitals are an important part of the industry because that's where the clinical trials and research are occurring. The life sciences industry provides growth opportunities in all parts of the state, Brooks notes.

### The Muncie factor

Research, testing and medical laboratories employ 449 people in Muncie, according to the BIO report. That's good enough for the city to rank fourth in that employment sector for MSAs with private employment of less than 75,000 people. Idaho Falls, Idaho, ranked first with 1,578 people working in that category.

Muncie's ranking in the BIO report is "largely because PA Labs is based in Muncie and its concentration of employment," Brooks states.

PA Labs provides pathology and laboratory medicine testing for clients 24 hours a day, seven days a week. While the main lab is in Muncie, the company employs more than 550 people in 52 locations throughout Indiana, according to the PA Labs web site.

"We're very fortunate to have them (PA Labs) here in this community as they continue to grow," states Terry Murphy, vice president of economic development for the Muncie-Delaware County Economic Development Alliance.

"As far as their impact here in Delaware County, they're a major employer. They're one of the top employers in the county. Good wages, the type of growing and stable business that communities look for."

Murphy notes there are about a dozen smaller life sciences companies in Delaware County. The larger laboratory could help in recruiting others to the area. "I think their presence here is an indication to other potential employers that we have the workforce and the skilled people to staff this type of facility and life sciences business."

### Medical devices in Michigan City

The Michigan City/LaPorte metropolitan area ranks 12th in the report among small cities in medical device and equipment employment. Data showed 327 people employed in that sector in

2006. Bloomington led the U.S. small cities category with 3,066 workers.

Michigan City and LaPorte County attract medical devices companies for two reasons: its advanced manufacturing concentration and its logistics, says John Regetz, Michigan City Economic Development Corporation executive director.

“We have the advanced manufacturing and logistics that the health care industry needs to support its business,” he maintains.

He gives credit for the region’s ranking to companies such as Dwyer Instruments and Dage-MTI, which use advanced manufacturing to make medical devices in Michigan City.

Michigan City is also becoming a logistics hub in Northwest Indiana, which adds to the success of area distributors such as RPS Imaging, Regetz states.

RPS Imaging is a supplier of radiological equipment for medical, veterinary and chiropractic markets, explains COO John Butler. The 52-employee company also services the equipment.

The Northwest Indiana location puts RPS Imaging geographically centered in its core market of Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan and Illinois.

“Being close in proximity to Chicago is convenient because we have a large customer base there, but also the advantage to being in Northwest Indiana is we can get east or south or west or around Chicago more conveniently,” he says. Michigan City is a small enough community that it makes it easier for the trucks and employees to travel, he adds.

**INFORMATION LINK**

**Resource:** Mike Brooks, Indiana Health Industry Forum, at [www.ihif.org](http://www.ihif.org)

**John Butler, RPS Imaging, at [www.rps-imaging.com](http://www.rps-imaging.com)**

**Terry Murphy, Muncie-Delaware County Economic Development Alliance, at [www.muncie.com/eda](http://www.muncie.com/eda)**

**John Regetz, Michigan City Economic Development Corporation, at [www.mc-edc.com](http://www.mc-edc.com)**

