

Greater Baltimore Committee Issues 2007 State of the Region Report; Baltimore Region Retains Top Rank for Research and Development

BALTIMORE, Dec. 20 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The Baltimore region maintained its 1st place ranking for academic research and development investment among 20 U.S. regions studied for the 2007 State of the Region Report, according to data released today by the Greater Baltimore Committee.

The report, compiled this year by the Greater Baltimore Committee and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, assisted by the University of Baltimore's Jacob France Institute, ranks Greater Baltimore and 19 key competing regions on 105 benchmark categories measuring business vitality, economic health and quality of life. This is the fifth in a series of "State of the Region" reports that have been issued since 1997.

The Baltimore region achieved top-five rankings in 24 categories. It ranked in the bottom five in 15 categories.

Academic research and development expenditures in 2005 in the Baltimore region topped \$1.8 billion, compared to more than \$1.6 billion spent on academic research in the Boston region, according to National Science Foundation data contained in the report. This is the second consecutive State of the Region report in which the Baltimore region has ranked first for academic research. Prior to 2003, the Baltimore region had ranked second to Boston.

"The Baltimore region's momentum as a center for research underscores the potential here for growth in bioscience and technology industry sectors," said **Greater Baltimore Committee** President and CEO Donald C. Fry. "This report also clearly affirms the stature of the Baltimore-Washington region as a technology super-corridor."

Driven by the Baltimore-DC corridor, Maryland ranks 3rd for high-tech employment growth from 2002 to 2005 among states where the regions in the study were located, according to the report. Maryland is one of only five states that experienced growth in high-tech employment during that period. The report measures high-tech employment by states because data for individual metro regions was not available.

"One of the values of this report is that it's about regions, not just individual jurisdictions. It offers a broader measure of business climate and quality of life," said Larry Klimovitz, executive director of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, which compiled most of the data for the report. "It also provides a reality check for government and business leaders, reminding us of the interdependence among jurisdictions in our region."

Other top-five categories for the Baltimore region include: per capita personal income growth, average air fare, household income, home price growth, educational and health services employment, and government employment.

Top five rankings also include: entrepreneurial dynamism, home ownership rates, physicians, minority-owned firms, air quality improvement, population density, low number of government units, workers using public transportation, two other transportation categories, and two hospital categories.

Stemming violent crime and traffic congestion continue to be among the region's toughest challenges.

The Baltimore region ranked 3rd for percentage of violent crime reduction and 10th for property crime reduction from 2004 to 2006. However, the region's violent crime rate of 823.8 per 100,000 population ranked it 19th. Nonetheless, the region's average annual 3.5 percent reduction in violent crime from 2004 to 2006 lifted it out of its last place ranking in the violent crime category for the first time since these studies began. Charlotte, N.C. ranks 20th on this report, with a violent crime rate of 837.7.

For commuters, the Baltimore region ranks 18th among the 20 regions studied for average travel time to work to work - 28.9 minutes.

Other categories for which the Baltimore region ranks among the bottom five include: manufacturing employment and growth, housing starts, overall air quality, leisure and hospitality employment and growth, information employment, infant mortality rate, and two other transportation categories.

Links to the State of the Region data will be posted on the web sites of the Greater Baltimore Committee, <http://www.gbc.org/> and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, <http://www.baltometro.org/>.