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**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT****Study: R.I. among top five states for technology**By Ted Nesi
PBN Staff Writer

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BOSTON – Rhode Island ranks in the top five states nationwide when it comes to technology, according to the eighth Annual State Competitiveness Report from the Beacon Hill Institute at Suffolk University.

The Boston-based think tank considers a state to be competitive “if it has in place the policies and conditions that ensure and sustain a high level of per capita income and continued growth.” To quantify that, researchers measure how all 50 states perform in eight categories.

Rhode Island ranked fifth in the country in the technology category, moving up two spots from its ranking last year.

The state’s good showing was based primarily on its educational and research assets.

Rhode Island ranked third nationally both in the number of science and engineering degrees awarded and in the amount of research support granted by the National Institutes of Health. The state ranked eighth in academic research and development; 13th in science and engineering graduate students; and 14th in patents.

“Since the arrival of the industrial revolution, the development and application of technology has been central to economic development,” the report said. “The technology subindex measures this by taking into account research funding, the number of patents issued, the proportion of scientists and engineers in the labor force, and the importance of high tech companies.”

Although the institute said the state has some competitive advantages in every category, technology was the only category in which the state was said to have no competitive disadvantages.

The news comes one week after it was announced that [Rhode Island had moved up to 11th place](#) in the 2008 State New Economy Index released by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation and the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation.

Outside of technology, however, the Beacon Hill report’s message was not as positive. When it came to overall competitiveness, the Ocean State did not rank in the top half.

The institute ranked Rhode Island 31st in the country for overall competitiveness, dropping 10 slots below its ranking in 2007.

The ranking put Rhode Island far behind Massachusetts, which came out first, and also behind Vermont (13th), Virginia (16th), New Hampshire (17th), Delaware (19th), Connecticut (21st), and Maine (26th), among others. Rhode Island did edge out New York (35th) and New Jersey (42nd). Mississippi placed last.

Technology was the only one of the eight categories in which Rhode Island ranked in the top 10. The state’s next-highest ranking was in security, in which Rhode Island ranked 15th. Last year, however, the state ranked 1st in security. The state also ranked 23rd in human resources and 24th in openness.

At the other end of the scale, Rhode Island’s infrastructure was ranked just fifth



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from the bottom, dragged down by high electricity prices. The state also lagged in government and fiscal policy (39th), business incubation (38th), and environmental policy (35th).

The Beacon Hill Institute describes itself as "grounded in the principles of limited government, fiscal responsibility and free markets." Its researchers are drawn from Suffolk University's economics department. For more information, go to www.beaconhill.org.

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