FOURTH economy

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Contact: Ben Aufill
Fourth Economy Consulting
ben.aufill@fourtheconomy.com
www.fourtheconomy.com
412.325.2457

National Fourth Economy Community Index Lists Top 10 Large-Sized & Mid-Sized Counties for 2017

Fourth Economy Consulting announces the latest release of its national community index, listing top counties from across the nation. The Fourth Economy Community Index highlights those communities ideally positioned to attract modern investment and managed economic growth a 21st-century economy.

FOURTH ECONOMY COMMUNITY INDEX

PITTSBURGH, PA – The latest edition of the Fourth Economy Community Index was released today, recognizing the top ten large-sized and top 10 mid-sized Fourth Economy Communities. These communities — large-sized with populations between 150,000 and 499,999 and mid-sized with populations between 50,000 and 149,999 — were selected because they represent regions that are poised to achieve sustainable economic growth while attracting people and investment.

Top 10 Large-Sized Communities for 2017

1. **Arlington County, Virginia**
2. **Chesapeake County (Norfolk), Virginia**
3. **Shawnee County, Kansas**
4. **Chittenden County, Vermont**
5. **Pulaski County, Arkansas**
6. **Albany County, New York**
7. **Hampden County, Massachusetts**
8. **Minnehaha County, South Dakota**
9. **Peoria County, Illinois**
10. **Champaign County, Illinois**

Top 10 Mid-Sized Communities for 2017

1. **Christian County, Kentucky**
2. **Riley County, Kansas**
3. **Rockingham County (Harrisonburg), Virginia**
4. **Curry County, New Mexico**
5. **Liberty County, Georgia**
6. **Eagle County, Colorado**
7. **Vernon Parish, Louisiana**
8. **Story County, Iowa**
9. **Roanoke County, Virginia**
10. **Cascade County, Montana**

The Fourth Economy Community Index is an independently conducted analysis intended to serve as a benchmark for community stakeholders to assess their capacity to attract and retain 21st-century investment while also improving the resiliency of their communities in response to future economic fluctuations.

"Accurately evaluating the factors communities possess for sustained economic growth and increased investment is based on more than just a few statistics. Through our work nationwide, we've learned to dig deeper to discover what drives the economic success and higher quality of place that we see in these communities" said Rich Overmoyer, CEO of Fourth Economy Consulting, who released the Index. "The Fourth Economy Community Index highlights these factors that are essential to creating stronger, more economically resilient communities."

"The Fourth Economy Community Index examines five elements that provide a foundation for sustainable economic success: Talent, Investment, Sustainability, Place, and Diversity. We selected a representative yet manageable set of indicators that were rigorously tested to provide insight into how a county is balancing these five elements," says Jerry Paytas, Vice President of Research and Analytics at Fourth Economy Consulting. "There is no silver bullet for economic competitiveness. You have to do a lot of things well for a county to adapt to the dynamic and fluid global economy."

The Fourth Economy Community Index has been expanded for 2017, adding new quantitative and qualitative measures, including factors involving the overall economic resiliency of the communities, new data on micropreneurs, and more.

About the Index

Key data for the Fourth Economy Community Index (http://www.fourtheconomyindex.com or #FECIndex) are collected from sources like the Census, Bureau of Labor Statistics, the CDC, HUD, and others. Metrics that make up the five areas of Investment, Talent, Sustainability, Place, and Diversity range from traditional economic development concepts (like labor force, wages, and entrepreneurial activity) to ideas with origins in other disciplines (like measures of diversity, toxic releases reported to the EPA, and access to arts and entertainment). The full dataset contains 19 distinct measures, which are weighted based on observations of the data using multivariate analysis, and on the level of influence they have on both internal and external investment decisions.

Because counties experience unique challenges and opportunities based on key attributes like population size, we divide counties into four classification categories based on population: Mega-, Large-, Mid-, and Small-size categories. From here, we can observe the data and dig into what works without aspiring to one definition of success that is based solely on big cities.

About Fourth Economy Consulting

Fourth Economy is a mission-driven consulting group that equips change agents with the tools they need to build better communities and stronger economies. Fourth Economy cultivates collaboration across multiple sectors and develops a unique, data-powered approach to guide each client engagement.

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