

We're #3 -- in global patent filings

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When it comes to inventing -- and protecting -- new technology for global markets, Minnesota is one of the most innovative states in the country, according to a study released Thursday by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation.

The study by the Kansas City, Mo.-based Kauffman Foundation tracked the number of international patent applications per 100,000 workers from each state in 1998 and 2006. Minnesota ranked third last year with 69.5 applications per 100,000 workers compared with 39.9 applications in 1998.

The report said Maplewood-based 3M Co. filed the most international patent applications for a U.S. company, accounting for 1.4 percent of all applications originating from U.S. businesses. Overall, 92.2 percent of all applications were filed by companies, compared with 7.8 percent for universities and research institutions.

The 1970 Patent Corporation Treaty (PCT) offers global protection for intellectual property in more than 100 countries with a single application. According to the study, the PCT applications are the best measure of innovation because they require more time and resources than applications filed with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

"PCT applications arguably represent some of the most sophisticated inventions originating in this country," the study said. "In short, these are some of the technologies that are likely to have high global utility and contribute to U.S. competitiveness in the long run."

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