How's the Economy Where You Live? 3 Interactive Maps Show State-by-State Comparisons

Daily Kos | READ STORY
Three different maps provide different angles in answering "how is the economy where you live?" The Wall Street Journal addresses the question using wage stagnation. The Washington Post uses a chronological map filtering out the counties where decade inflation-adjusted incomes peaked. The final map is from a New York Times multi-article looking at the percentage of men of prime working age (25-54) who aren't working.

The Geography of Happiness

Pennsylvania State University | READ STORY
Geography and other environmental factors can affect residents' happiness. Researchers at Pennsylvania

President's Corner

The NACDEP election results have been released; our western regional rep is Roslynn Brain, Utah State University and our President Elect is Josh Clements, Iowa State University. The deadline to submit abstracts for the 2015 NACDEP Conference in Little Rock AR is Jan. 15.

The 2015 Community Development Society Conference will be July 19-22, in Lexington, KY, USA. The Call for Abstracts is Jan. 31, 2015; To submit go to this link.

-Paul Lachapelle
MACDEP President

Upcoming Events
State University looked at self-reported mental health assessments of people living across the U.S. counties and found a "sweet spot" for happiness. One place that correlates with more happiness is the line between rural and urban areas, where residents may benefit from the best of both worlds.

As U.S. Energy Production Grows, Public Policy Views Show Little Change

Despite the growth of domestic energy production, public attitudes about energy policies have changed only modestly in recent years. In broad terms, developing alternative energy is viewed as a more important priority than expanding the exploration and production of oil, coal and natural gas.
Drought impact study: California agriculture faces greatest water loss ever seen

UC Davis | READ STORY
A new report from the University of California, Davis, shows that California agriculture is weathering its worst drought in decades due to groundwater reserves. The study found that the drought -- the third most severe on record -- is responsible for the greatest water loss ever seen in California agriculture, with river water for Central Valley farms reduced by roughly one-third.
In recent years, high-profile protest movements have erupted in several emerging and developing countries. However, a recent Pew Research Center survey finds that many people in these nations remain relatively disconnected from politics. Although most vote in elections, few take part in other forms of political participation.

**Take That, Car Culture: Public Transportation Ridership Up**

**APTA | READ STORY**  
Despite plummeting gas prices, public transportation ridership in the U.S. hit a record high. According to a new report by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), 2.7 billion trips were taken on public transit systems in the third quarter of 2014. That marks a 1.8 percent increase from the same period last year, and makes it the third quarter with the highest ridership since 1974. It continues a trend, as 12 of the last 15 quarters have shown increased public transportation use, APTA says.

**Planned Meagher County hydro storage project could buffer wind, solar surges**  
Bozeman Chronical; Dec 1

**Homeowners sue city of Bozeman over leaking landfill**  
Bozeman Chronical; Dec 16

**Split PSC shoots down NWE bid to buy wind power from Montana project**  
Montana Standard; Dec 19

**Ravalli County: Small manufacturing where timber used to be**  
Ravalli Republic; Dec 22

**Retrofitted space aims to enable creative manufacturing**  
Independent Record; Dec 28