



San Diego hangs on to top rating

By **REBECCA GO**, The Daily Transcript

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San Diego continues to lead as a high-tech hotbed, but still lags behind neighboring Los Angeles and national powerhouse Silicon Valley, according to a recent report released by the Milken Institute.

The metropolitan area of San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos maintained its national seventh-place ranking since Milken's last high-tech research report of 2003 data, with the region's strong research support and robust representation in several technology fields.

San Diego placed in the top 10 in four of the 19 sectors. The rankings were based on the most recent available data from 2007.

At the time, San Diego housed more than 136,000 high-tech jobs, and wages for the region's technology workers totaled more than \$14 billion, according to the report.

The authors of "North America's High-Tech Economy" described San Diego as "the world's most geographically dense biotech cluster" and as possessing an "enviable position" in telecommunications.

The report noted the presence of major companies such as **Qualcomm** (Nasdaq: QCOM) and **AT&T** (NYSE: T), which helped propel the region into the eighth spot for communications equipment manufacturing.

San Diego's strongest showings, however, were in audio and video equipment manufacturing and scientific research and development services.

The metropolitan area's audio and video equipment manufacturing sector placed first, making up 18.4 percent of the wages earned in the sector and employing more than 6 percent of the sector's work force in the United States and Canada.

San Diego's scientific research sector fell to second behind Cambridge-Newton-Framingham, Mass., in 2007, but boasted San Diego's highest number of high-tech employees and wages: Nearly 25,000 workers collectively pulled in \$3.8 billion in 2007.

The metro region placed seventh in telecommunications.

San Diego's neighbors are close contenders among the overall industry's top 10.

Los Angeles dropped to fifth place from fourth in 2007, but maintained a strong aerospace industry and received enormous medical research support from local universities California Institute of Technology, UCLA and USC.

The technology-intensive motion picture industry also provided a substantial boost.

Just north of San Diego, the Santa Ana-Anaheim-Irvine metro area climbed the rankings ladder in 2007, moving to eighth place -- just behind San Diego -- from 11th. The area's strengths are in medical equipment manufacturing, medical and diagnostic labs, and measuring, electromedical, and control instruments.

Irvine is also home to Qualcomm rival **Broadcom** (Nasdaq: BRCM).

The Silicon Valley metro area -- San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara -- naturally remains the "preeminent high-tech cluster in North America and the world," with its ability to retain and attract top-level researchers, venture capitalists and entrepreneurs, Milken report authors wrote.

The area's anchor companies include **Intel** (Nasdaq: INTC), **Advanced Micro Devices** (NYSE: AMD), **Google** (Nasdaq: GOOG), **Yahoo!** (Nasdaq: YHOO) and **Cisco** (Nasdaq: CSCO).