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Mark Pazniokas

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Top managers at Connecticut's fastest-growing, high-tech companies say in a report released today that they are frustrated by inattentive state officials, inadequate transportation and weak ties to colleges and universities.

A six-month study by the Connecticut Technology Council found that high-tech companies are the key to an economic recovery, but these business sparkplugs see this state's government as indifferent to their growth, even as other states court them.

One chief executive told the researchers that Gov. Ed Rendell of Pennsylvania approached him at a trade show and offered space in the Philadelphia Navy Yard and a \$30 million relocation grant.

Another reported an odd bit of homework by one suitor: After his mother moved to Florida, a representative of Gov. Charlie Crist called and asked, "Would you like to move your company down here to be near your mother?"

Nearly every top manager surveyed had a story about getting regular phone calls from economic development officials in states such as North Carolina and Texas, offering relocation deals.

The report, which was timed to coincide with the change in administrations, echoes many of the claims made by Democratic Gov.-elect Dan Malloy and his Republican

opponent, Tom Foley, during their campaigns.

"The troubling news is that even though almost all the CEOs we talked to lead firms actually founded here, and they like Connecticut personally, they have serious concerns about their ability to thrive in this state," said Matthew Nemerson, the president of the council, which represents technology companies.

The tech officials said they can tolerate the relatively high cost of doing business in Connecticut. Of greater concern is a sense that state is doing little to promote clusters of like-minded companies and nurture a critical mass necessary to attract and retain young talent.

"Successful CEOs see business environments as ecosystems, not political jurisdictions," said Casey R. Pickett, a Yale researcher who led the study. "For them, networks are like blood vessels, carrying the ideas, talent, money and support they need to grow."

The study and research was overseen by a task force led by senior technology executives from United Technologies, Covidien and Gerber Technology, with support from graduate students at Yale and the University of Connecticut.

"The good news is that this group of business leaders believes that if the new governor implements the kind of solutions they are recommending, we can become more competitive quickly," said Christopher Kalish, director of the GE Edgelab in Stamford and chairman of the technology council.

But some of the shortcomings identified do not seem subject to quick fixes.

Executives said they need better transportation, including more direct flights from Bradley International Airport and rail and bus service to better tie the state to Boston and New York. They also called for more vibrant urban centers to attract young talent, and more in-state sources of venture capital.

One fix, of course, is up to the next governor. The council urges him to play an

aggressive role in supporting the companies with the greatest potential to grow jobs.

The governor should give an annual state of technology address to the "innovation community."

He should create an economic development "war room," which would conduct monthly strategy meetings and direct aid to companies with the highest growth potential.

The study also found poor ties between industry and the state's large research universities.

Over the past 20 years, Connecticut has outperformed only Michigan, the home of a shrinking auto industry, in job growth. As Malloy noted in a speech Tuesday to a Hartford business group, its business environment ranked 35th among all states in a survey by CNBC.

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