

Insider Louisville

American Human Development Project: Kentucky part of 'Third World' America

By [TERRY BOYD](#) | Published: NOVEMBER 20, 2010

(http://insiderlouisville.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/MappingTheMeasureofAmerica_humandevindx.jpg)

Since you're reading this, you probably live in Louisville, a small Southern city with above-average amenities such as restaurants, retail, art galleries and parks.

We have a deep economic base built on logistics, manufacturing, tourism and professional services such as accounting.

We have multiple universities, museums and a swell new downtown arena.

In short, a pretty complete little town.

But you don't have to drive very far to realize Louisville is one of maybe three oases of civilization (Lexington, Bowling Green and Northern Kentucky) in a state that doesn't compare well to my former home of Turkey, much less to Indiana.

Data released last week by the [American Human Development Project](http://www.measureofamerica.org/maps/) (<http://www.measureofamerica.org/maps/>) puts numbers – lots of numbers – on the vast disparities between life in, say, Connecticut and in our kissin' cousin state of West Virginia.

Here's how [Fast Company](http://www.fastcodesign.com/1662704/infographic-of-the-day-quality-of-life-varies-wildly-across-america) (<http://www.fastcodesign.com/1662704/infographic-of-the-day-quality-of-life-varies-wildly-across-america>) sums it up:

"If you call Connecticut home, your standard of living and economic opportunities are almost two times better than that of someone in West Virginia. That basic inequality shouldn't be news to any American who's spent a day outside. But rarely has it been put in such a stark visual form."

In short, we're America's Third World of poverty and desperation.

If nothing else, Kentucky is consistent. We're in the group of states that is the poorest, sickest, worst educated and has the lowest life expectancy.

Funny how none of that ever is at the fore in political campaigns. I don't remember Jack Conway or Rand Paul promising to lift Kentucky out of the Dark Ages.

Maybe Gov. Beshear and Mayor Abramson have a plan. We know David Williams does ... to wave to Mississippi as we pass them going backward.

(For more takes on the American Human Development Project, go to the [Measure of America news page](http://www.measureofamerica.org/news/) (<http://www.measureofamerica.org/news/>) with links to take you directly to Atlantic Monthly magazine, the New York Times and other websites.)



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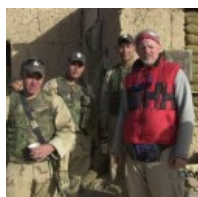
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Terry Boyd has seven years experience as a business/finance journalist, and eight years a military reporter with European Stars and Stripes. As a banking and finance reporter at Business First, Boyd dealt directly with the most influential executives and financiers in Louisville.

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