Patenting in Nevada (Part 2)

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In my blog post last week about Patenting in Nevada (here) I reported statistics showing the steep growth in the numbers of utility and design patents (see definitions of the two types of patents here) granted for inventions by Nevada inventors or on applications by Nevada assignees. This post will put the Nevada numbers in the larger U.S. context.

The rapid growth in 1976-2012 in the numbers of utility and design patents granted for inventions by Nevada inventors or on applications by Nevada assignees shown in the previous post (here) is illustrated in Figure 1 by blue and green trend lines, while the red line follows the trend in the growth of all U.S. utility and design patents granted in the same period (in thousands of U.S. utility and design patents). The comparison of the trend lines in Figure 1 shows that the trend in the growth of the numbers of utility and design patents granted for inventions by Nevada inventors or on applications by Nevada assignees was much steeper than the overall trend in the growth of all U.S. utility and design patents. In 2012 about 13 times more utility and design patents were granted than in 1976 for inventions invented by or co-invented by at least one Nevada inventor (from 87 in 1976 to 1,135 in 2012), and about 66 times more utility and design patents were granted than in 1976 on applications owned by Nevada assignees at the time of the publication of the applications (from 20 in 1976 to 1,317 in 2012). For all U.S. utility and design patents about 3.7 times more utility and design patents were granted in 2012 than in 1976.

The positive trend in the numbers of utility and design patents granted for inventions by Nevada inventors or on applications by Nevada assignees evidences the dramatic increase in the absolute numbers of such patents in 1976-2012. However, it is important to view the numbers in the context of the overall growth that Nevada experienced in the past two decades in population and economy.
Figure 2 shows that when calculating utility patents per million inhabitants, the trend in the growth of the numbers of Nevada utility patents granted in 1992-2012 followed the overall U.S. trend but that the Nevada numbers of utility patents granted per million Nevada inhabitants were consistently lower than the U.S. national numbers. Figure 2 focuses on utility patents that are designated by the USPTO as having a Nevada origin, meaning utility patents that had a Nevada inventor listed on the patent application as the only inventor or as the first co-inventor. The number of Nevada utility patents per million Nevada inhabitants is compared to the number of U.S. utility patents (U.S. inventor only or the U.S. co-inventor listed first) per million U.S. inhabitants. In 2012, about 273 utility patents were granted per million Nevada inhabitants on applications in which a Nevada inventor was listed as the only inventor or the first co-inventor; in the same year, about 386 utility patents were granted per million U.S. inhabitants on applications in which a U.S. inventor (from any U.S. state or territory, including Nevada) was listed as the only inventor or the first co-inventor.

Figure 3 shows that even when the numbers of utility patents are calculated per billion dollar GDP, the trend in the numbers of Nevada utility patents followed the national trend in 1997-2012 but that the numbers of utility patents granted per billion dollar Nevada GDP were also consistently lower than the U.S. national numbers. In 2012, about 5.6 utility patents were granted per billion dollar Nevada GDP on applications in which a Nevada inventor was listed as the only inventor or the first co-inventor; the same year, about 9.3 utility patents were granted per billion dollar U.S. GDP on applications in which a U.S. inventor (from any U.S. state or territory, including Nevada) was listed as the only inventor or the first co-inventor.

While Nevada should be proud of its steep growth in the absolute numbers of utility and design patents granted on applications by at least one Nevada inventor or Nevada assignee (see Figure 1 above and figures in the previous post here), it lags behind the nation when its numbers of utility patents granted on inventions by local inventors per million inhabitants and per billion dollar GDP are compared to the per million inhabitant and per billion dollar GDP U.S. national numbers.

The statistics for this post were derived from the following sources:
- USPTO Patent Full-Text and Image Database
- Calendar Year Patent Statistics
- Historical National Population Estimates (July 1, 1900 to July 1, 1999)
- U.S. Census Bureau, Population Economic Research, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis