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OUR VIEW: A possible Aetna move should be a wake-up call

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When the New Haven Register's Luther Turmelle heard that Aetna was thinking about moving its headquarters out of state, he talked to some experts about why the insurance giant might want to leave. We thought you should hear a few of their thoughts.

"Companies are looking to move their headquarters right now to places that have panache and that's something that Hartford doesn't have," said John Boyd, whose Princeton, New Jersey, firm consults with some of the nation's leading companies on corporate relocations.

We've heard something like this before, when General Electric chose to move to Boston, at least in part because it is a vibrant economic and technology center.

Put another way, being "the land of steady habits" isn't enough anymore.

"Are we becoming one of those places that are like a cul-de-sac when it comes to business growth?" Connecticut-based economist Donald Klepper-Smith asked rhetorically. "If a company is looking to grow, right now they're saying, 'Thanks, but no thanks, Connecticut.'"

And, yes, even if you're not an Aetna employee, you may be affected, according to Klepper-Smith.

He said he'll be watching single-family housing prices in the coming months.

"If we start to see a sustained decline in the housing market ... it has the potential to go on for years," he said.

If these gentlemen are correct, then we should support Gov. Malloy's efforts to make the state something more than just a suburb of New York City - and an expensive one at that.

"I know it's a tough sell to the voters," said Boyd, "but that's why in a high-cost state like Connecticut, corporate incentives are necessary because of the cost differential."