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The buzz

Charity Navigator, a leading evaluator of U.S. charities, has awarded the Erie Community Foundation with its top designation, a four-star rating for sound fiscal management.

"Only 21 percent of the charities we rate have received at least two consecutive four-star evaluations, indicating that the Erie Community Foundation consistently executes its mission in a fiscally responsible way," said Ken Berger, chief executive of Charity Navigator.

Mike Batchelor, president of the Erie Community Foundation, said savvy donors are demanding more accountability and transparency.

"We do our best every day and are honored to receive this recognition," he said.

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Erie lawyers Tim George and Eric Purchase have formed the personal injury law firm of Purchase & George P.C.

The firm, located at 2525 W. 26th St., will represent clients in Erie, Crawford, Mercer, Venango, Warren and Forest counties.

For more information, visit the firm's Website at YourErieAccidentLawyers.com or call 835-0300.

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You'll hear wind power mentioned repeatedly, and often in the same breath as solar energy, as an environmentally friendly alternative to fossil fuels.

But many environmentalists don't count themselves as fans, judging in part by their reaction to news accounts about plans to build wind farms in the waters of Lake Erie.

Mail and e-mail responses, particularly from those identifying themselves as environmentalists, appear to be overwhelmingly opposed to the expansion of wind energy.

Laura Jackson, president of Save Our Allegheny Ridges, also known as S.O.A.R., offers an example in her June 28 testimony to the Pennsylvania Game Commission opposing construction of wind turbines on state game lands.

That testimony said in part: "We ask that close attention needs to be paid to the impacts of granting rights of way across state game lands to wind development. Those clearings most definitely degrade the quality of wildlife habitat on our state game lands, which contain much-needed habitat."

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There's word that the economy is improving, but little indication can be found in the latest foreclosure numbers.

A report from CoreLogic, which tracks the real estate industry, shows that 5.23 percent of Erie County homeowners with a mortgage are more than three months behind on their payments. That's up from 4.61 percent who were in that same position a year ago.

As of the end of May, 1.75 percent of all Erie County homes were in foreclosure. That's up from 1.45 percent in May 2009.

Both numbers are better than the state and national averages.

Got an idea for The Buzz? Call Jim Martin at 870-1668 or send e-mail to jim.martin@timesnews.com.