

Boise Ranks in Top Ten of Best Places for Business, Careers and Cycling

Forbes Ranks Boise Number 2 For Businesses

Julie Howard - *The Idaho Statesman*
Friday, May 9, 2003

Job growth, low costs boost rating
among US cities

Surprise, Boise. Even through layoffs, a war and the struggling economy, the Boise area on Thursday was named the second best place in the country for business and careers by Forbes Magazine.

Boise isn't new to this list, ranking sixth last year and as high as fifth in 2000. But coming in just behind dynamic Austin, Texas — a metropolitan area with a population of 1.3 million — was reason for local leaders to celebrate. "It's a surprise, a pleasant surprise," said Shirl Boyce, vice president of the Boise Metro Economic Development Council. "Yes, indeed, we have been affected by a downturn in the economy, but we haven't been affected as much as some other areas."

And Boyce certainly will be sure to pass the message on — especially to executives from a firm that will be visiting the Treasure Valley next week seeking a new location for their 500-employee technology firm. "There's a lot of competition for this kind of stuff," said Boyce, who declined to name the firm. "This ranking sends a signal that this is a pretty good place to be. So, it's something we'll mention."

The magazine's fifth annual survey acknowledged the troubled economy by giving special attention to the cost of doing business, an area where Boise ranked high. For the first time, the survey also included factors such as crime rates and housing costs. Forbes did not disclose how those factors affected the rankings. The list included 150 U.S. metropolitan areas.

"With costs 14 percent below the national average, Boise has been able to attract and keep tech titans Micron Technology and Hewlett-Packard," said the report, which showed the Treasure Valley with a 3.3 percent job growth and a 2.9 percent income growth since the previous year. "The tight labor supply has loosened over the past three years, with unemployment jumping to 5.8 percent from 3.3 percent."

The Boise area has a tremendous draw for businesses and workers, said Ed Zimmer, president and CEO of ECCO, an electronics firm that has been in the valley since

Boise is Number 1 Mountain Bike Town in USA

Roger Phillips - *The Idaho Statesman*
Saturday, May 10, 2003

Magazine praises trail system, climate,
job picture and amenities



Boise once again was named the best town in the United States for mountain biking, adding to its national reputation as a great place to live and ride. Bike magazine's June issue says Boise is No. 1 in its third annual ranking of the country's top five biking towns. It's the first time the magazine has included Boise in its rankings.

"That's pretty awesome," said Riley Mallard, sales manager for George's Cycles and Fitness. The Southern California-based magazine ranked towns on the availability of trails, the cost of living and quality of life. "A designation like this doesn't hurt" when recruiting people for tech jobs in the area, said Georgia Smith, spokeswoman for the Idaho Department of Commerce.

Rounding out the top five were Burlington, Vt., Port Townsend, Wash., Portland, Maine, and Greenville, S.C.

Mallard wasn't surprised to see Boise at the top of the list. "Not at all; that's why we live here," he said. "We absolutely love our trails, and it's cool to get some recognition."

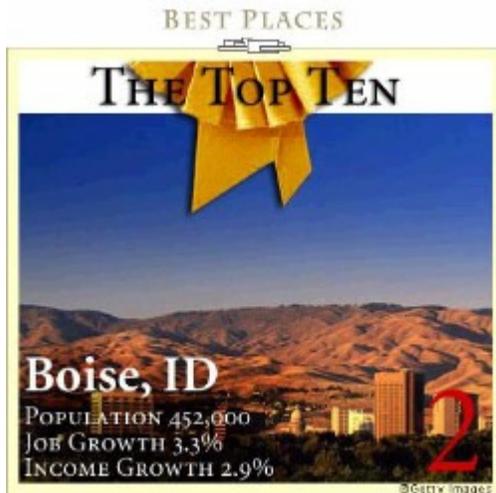
Boise has been recognized before: It was named the best mountain biking town by rival publication Mountain Bike in its February 2001 issue. That same year, the International Mountain Biking Association gave Idaho the highest ranking in the United States for mountain bike trails and access. Bike described Boise as "home to a strong job market, mild year-round temperatures and more big city amenities than you could rightfully expect in a town of this size."

Boise offers cyclists "a massive range of wide-open foothills laced with singletrack," according to Bike editor Vernon Felton. "You can hop on your bike downtown and within 3 miles you're cruising the dirt." Boise residents take advantage of the Foothills. About 100,000 people a year hike, bike, run, hunt and ride motorcycles on the 80 miles of Ridge to Rivers trails, says the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

A recent survey by the Outdoor Industry Foundation also ranked Idaho No. 1 in the U.S. per capita for bike riders who ride singletrack trails. According to the survey, 31.6 percent of Idahoans ride singletrack, nearly double the national average of 16.7 percent. Idaho also was ranked third for dirt-road riding and sixth for road riding.

The No. 1 ranking in Bike magazine also didn't surprise 27-year-old James Runner. After living in Boise as a teenager, Runner moved back five years ago because he wanted to do more mountain biking. He works as a bike mechanic at

1972. "If we were located near most of our customers, we'd be in Peoria, Ill.," Zimmer said. "We're here because of the lifestyle," he said. "This is where we wanted to be and where we wanted to raise our families. Our employees are paid according to industry standards, and they can get a better lifestyle here and better recreational opportunities."
SOURCE: Forbes May 9, 2003 Edition



Screamin Toad in Hyde Park and competes in downhill mountain bike races throughout the West. He said many people he meets at races know Boise as a bike-friendly town.

Mike Cooley, co-owner of George's Cycle and Fitness, estimates 10,000 bicycles are sold annually at bike shops and outdoor specialty stores in Boise. That doesn't include bikes sold at department stores and discount chains. Cooley estimates the total value of bicycles and accessories sold at Boise specialty stores is between \$7 million and \$8 million annually.

Shawn Grossman, owner of Big Bikes in Boise, said the city's active outdoor community and "a passion for cycling and a business degree" motivated him to start his bike shop three years ago. "Boise is a great town for cycling," he said.

SOURCE: Bike June 2003 Edition

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