

Broomfield makes list of best places to live

City lands at No. 19 in Money mag's annual ranking

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Broomfield is a great place to live, according to Money magazine's latest rankings of the best places to live in the U.S.

Using data such as job opportunities, schools and activities, Money staffers ranked Broomfield 19th on its 2010 list of the top 100 cities with populations of 50,000 to 300,000. Other Colorado cities that made the list were Fort Collins (No. 6), Highlands Ranch (12), Loveland (33) and Arvada (58).

Eden Prairie, Minn., ranked No. 1.

Broomfield's ranking was no surprise to Mayor Pat Quinn.

He cited open space, trails, good schools, a low crime rate and 300 days of sunshine as factors that make the city a gem.

Money magazine agreed. In its summation of Broomfield, at <http://money.cnn.com>, it stated, "With a prime location only 20 minutes from both Denver and Boulder, Broomfield is a safe, active community with a very strong school district and much for residents to enjoy.

"Spend the day walking along Broomfield's 66 miles of trails or start up a game on one of the sports fields in Broomfield's numerous green parks.

"If it's raining, head to the Paul Derda Recreation Center, a facility with an indoor aquatic park, climbing wall, game room, and fitness classes."

Quinn, who has two daughters ages 5 and 8, said it all could be summed up in less than 10 words: "It is a great place to raise a family."

The Money ranking breaks down a variety of city statistics. Among the numbers magazine staffers crunched were median income (\$96,930), auto insurance premiums (\$1,532 average price quote for state), job growth (46.86 percent from 2000 to 2009) and median home price (\$260,000)

Money additionally considered access to leisure activities, such as: the number of restaurants (3,016), movie theaters (31) and public libraries (65) within 15 miles; museums (seven) and public golf courses (149) within 30 miles; and ski resorts (15) within 100 miles.

Quality of life issues and community demographics also factored into the equation, including crime rates, amount of rainfall, high temperatures in July, low temperatures in January, the median age of residents, the number of married couples and racial diversity.

Lorene Armenta, who moved to Broomfield with her family in 1974 from the San Jose, Calif., area, was not a bit surprised by Broomfield making the list.

"I'm very proud the town made the list," she said. "It is a great community."

She pointed to Broomfield's lack of congestion and its schools as proof of the town's first-rate status. But Armenta said there was one asset that trumps all others in making Broomfield a great place -- safety.

"You never had to worry about your kids riding their bikes down to the recreation center," she said. "Not every place is like that."

Paul Rosser has only been a Broomfielder for 11/2 years, but in that time the town has charmed the former Denver resident.

Rosser said his move has given him the best of both worlds. On the one hand, he has convenient access to downtown Denver's dining and entertainment. On the other hand, he can escape the hustle and bustle of the city for Broomfield's more relaxed atmosphere.

"The city is thoughtfully planned out with its residential, commercial and open space," he said. "The lack of large commercial development is what really makes it feel like a small town."

To those who worry the ranking will spoil that small-town feel of which Rosser spoke, Quinn pointed to the city's 2005 comprehensive plan. The plan includes goals for 40 percent of open space, even when the city hits its buildout -- projected at about 90,000 residents between 2025 and 2045.

That, Quinn said, means even when there are more people living within its boundaries, Broomfield will still have the amenities residents love.

-- *Staff writer Elwood K. Shelton contributed to this report.*