Bend Named in Money Magazineâ€™s Top 100 'Best Places to Live'

by K_Guice

It will come as no surprise to people who live in Bend; the city has made the pages of another national magazine for being one of the â€œBest Places to Live.â€•

Along with two other Oregon cities, it made the top 100 list in the August issue of Money magazine. Bend came in at No. 86, topped by Beaverton at No. 79 and Hillsboro at No. 63.

â€œThis city is known throughout the United States and even many parts of the world,â€• said Mike Dilliard, a broker at ReMax Equity Group Inc. The resident of 30 years, and realtor for 19, says people are drawn here for a multitude of reasons.

â€œThey come here for the climate and the beauty,â€• he said. â€œWhat I hear more than anything else is the recreational opportunities; the mountains, the river and the golf.â€•

The top five on the list included: Fort Collins, Colorado; Naperville, Illinois; Sugar Land, Texas; Columbia/Ellicott City, Maryland and Cary, North Carolina.

Money also listed the top 25 cities with highest incomes, the priciest homes, the most singles and the shortest commute; among several others. While Bend didnâ€™t make any of those lists, the cityâ€™s individual stats speak for themselves.

Looking at money matters, Bend's median family income of $54,624 fell below the average of $62,555. There is no sales tax, compared to a â€œbest places averageâ€• of 6.6 percent. However, the state income tax rate of 5-9 percent was higher when compared to the average of 2.77-6.49 percent.

Bendâ€™s median home price is reported to be $270,000 compared to the average $256,659.

As for the air and climate that bring so many to Bend, the stats showed that to be true. The air quality was 94.2 percent. That was better than the â€œbest places averageâ€• of 71.9 percent.

Annual precipitation came in at 11.73 inches as compared to the average 36 inches. On a hot July day, Bend was a cooler place to be sitting at 80.5Â° F while the bestâ€™s average was 87.7Â°.

Money magazine worked with data provider OnBoard of New York and consultant Bert Sperling of BestPlaces.net to choose their top 100. â€œWe set out to find livable locales that combine the best of city and suburban life,â€• according to Money magazine.

The publication started out with 745 places that had populations exceeding 50,000. They then screened out 670 cities with more than 300,000 people and retirement havens where more than 40 percent of the residents are over 50.

Next, they eliminated 201 cities with low education scores, high crime rates, absurdly high housing costs, declines in employment or income less than 90 percent of the state median.Once Money magazine narrowed down the list to 201 small cities, they ranked the remaining places based on what matters most: A Money/ICR poll of 1,005 Americans found that ample job opportunities, good schools, and low crime are the most important characteristics people look for in a place to live.

The publication also looked at the most disliked attributes like congestion, high crime and poor job opportunities. Using that information, the magazine ranked places using 38 quality-of-life indicators and six economic opportunity measures in the following categories: Ease of living, health, education, crime, park space, arts and leisure.When it was all said and done, Fort Collins stood alone. However, if you ask people like Dilliard, he thinks his Bend is tops. â€œI love the climate, I love the beauty of it hereâ€¦ and the people are great.â€•

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