



JEROME A. POLLOS/Press

Randy Myers sits in front of Java on Sherman as pedestrians and restaurant patrons crowd the sidewalks Monday along Sherman Avenue. Coeur d'Alene was recently listed at number three on the 2008 list of Best U.S. Cities for Doing Business, co-released by INC.com and Newgeography.com.

Coeur d'Alene on Best Cities list

Lake City ranked third by Newgeography.com

By ALECIA WARREN
Staff writer

Proven by People's Sexiest, Newsweek's Sleaziest and Forbes' Most Powerful, nothing is final until you make the list.

Now the Lake City can attest that it, too, is catalogued as unequivocal.

Coeur d'Alene sat proudly at number three on the 2008 list of Best U.S. Cities for Doing Business, co-released by INC.com and Newgeography.com on Monday. Coeur d'Alene holds third not only in the "Small Cities" category, but also the "All Cities" panorama including metropolitan areas of every size.

Midland, Texas, was rated as the number one best city, and St. George, Utah, came in second.

The list, based on current and long-term growth trends, is derived from three-month rolling averages of U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics "state and area" unadjusted employment data.

"The biggest thing is we're trying to be objective," said Joel Kotkin, executive editor of Newgeography.com. Also a presidential fellow at Chapman University in Orange County, Calif., Kotkin calculated the list with an economist from Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif.

"There are so many other lists

that add factors like 'who is educated, do (cities) have good hotels or good meals,' and we really try to take the extraneous out of it and do it as objectively as we possibly can."

Growth percentages look more impressive in smaller settings, Kotkin said, so he wasn't surprised by small communities pulling top rank. Cities in the Intermountain

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JOEL KOTKIN,
Newsography executive editor

West like Coeur d'Alene just tend to lure more business owners.

"It's a very attractive area, whether for a down-shifting boomer looking to slow down or for a person who wants to raise a family," Kotkin said, adding that the region's housing prices are also appealingly moderate. "Taxes are relatively low — well, if you live in California or New York, they seem low. It's business friendly."

Coeur d'Alene has held the spotlight for economic success for the past few years, said Jonathan Coe, president of the Coeur d'Alene Chamber of Commerce. In both 2005 and 2006, the city qualified in the top five metropolitan

areas in the country for percent job growth.

"Over the past 20 years, we've seen a significant increase in manufacturing," Coe said, adding that manufacturing companies like Buck Knives have cropped up in the last 10 years and expanded the city's core employment base. "The tourism industry has also been very successful. If you look at places like Silverwood (Theme Park) and the growth that's been going on there, it's seen a lot of job creation."

The population influx has also boosted employment for construction companies, he added, both in housing and commercial building.

A high ranking on the Best Cities list will make Coeur d'Alene a more powerful magnet for future economic growth, Kotkin predicted.

"What this does is give outstanding communities the chance to make themselves known," he said. "This is a big country, and the attention usually goes to a relatively small number of very large places. If you're an entrepreneur and want to go to a place where other entrepreneurs are creating jobs, this gives an idea of where you want to go, both in locating a business or expanding a business."

To see the list, go to: Newgeography.com