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BG again lands on Forbes top 20 list

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For the second consecutive year, Bowling Green has landed a top 20 spot in **Forbes** magazine's ranking of best small places for business and careers. Bowling Green ranked 19th out of 179 small cities across the nation. This is the 11th year that **Forbes**, a national business and financial magazine, has published the list. Bowling Green also made the list last year, ranking 12th, and in 2006, ranking 14th.

"It is an independent, unbiased evaluation of our community," said Jim Hizer, president and CEO of the Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce. "It sends a clear message to prospective investors, current investors and those who are seeking career opportunities."

The magazine ranks cities based on their cost of energy, taxes, office space and the cost of labor, projected job growth and educational attainment.

"All of southcentral Kentucky has a low cost of doing business compared to the rest of the state and the nation," said Jessica Thompson, communications director for the Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce.

Bowling Green's cost of living is 6.9 percent lower than the national average. The area also has lower utility and tax costs compared to other cities, Thompson said.

"Everything that goes into running business and keeping the lights on every day, it costs less to do that here," Thompson said.

Bowling Green was also ranked highly for the strong education attainment levels of its residents.

"We have really good high schools here, too," Thompson said. "We have a good graduation rate from the high school level all the way up to the college level."

Last year, Bowling Green ranked 12th on the **Forbes** list, but considering that almost 200 communities are ranked, falling seven spots is an insignificant change, Hizer said.

"We have to remember the world of economic development is extremely competitive. We're a target for other communities," he said. "In other parts of the country, they want to be like us or they want to be better than us. It should be no surprise there are some communities that are shooting for us."

This is the second national recognition Bowling Green has received in the past month – it recently ranked eighth in its class for attracting new businesses by Site Selection Magazine, a real estate and economic development publication.

The recognition serves as a morale booster during difficult times, Hizer said.

"We know that things are difficult right now economically all over the world, and we're no exception to that," he said. "To have a publication like **Forbes** remind us that, by comparison, we're doing better than the average community is a good thing for us."

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