

Detroit moves up on best places list

BY FARRIELA KRAMER
AP NEWSFEATURES

NEW YORK (AP) — Gainesville, Fla., which gained national attention from the murders of five college students in 1980, is now the best place to live in the United States, Money magazine said in an annual ranking released last week.

The Detroit metropolitan area took a big jump in the ranking, rising from 285 last year to 56 this year.

Other Michigan metropolitan areas on Money Magazine's ranking of the 300 best places to live in the country (numbers in parentheses show 1994 ranking) are:

- 33. Ann Arbor (180)
- 47. Benton Harbor (289)
- 49. Flint (297)
- 56. Detroit (295)
- 81. Kalamazoo/Battle Creek (237)
- 98. Lansing (282)
- 122. Grand Rapids/Muskegon (234)
- 161. Saginaw/Bay City/Midland (298)
- 222. Jackson (300)

Yuba City, Calif., once notorious for another series of murders, finished last in the ranking of the nation's 300 biggest metropolitan areas by the glossy personal finance monthly.

Gainesville, a college town cited for its gracious charm and a relaxed way of life, climbed from No. 7 in 1994 to the top spot this year due in part to its strong economy. Yuba City, an agricultural area north of Sacramento, fell from No. 291 as poor weather damaged farmland.

"The starkest comparison between the two is if you just look at the economies," said Richard Eisenberg, an assistant managing editor at Money.

Gainesville boasted 6.2 percent job growth last year and its unemployment rate stands at 2.8 percent. In contrast, almost one-fifth of Yuba City residents are out of work.

It was in Yuba City in 1971 that authorities exhumed the bodies of 25 migrant farm workers hacked to death by Juan Corona.

The two cities also are about as far apart geographically as can be in the continental United States. The shortest possible drive is 2,920 miles, according to the American Automobile Association.

Money's annual ranking of places to live has become something of a media event. Each year the magazine examines a range of categories to compile its list and keeps the results a secret until

the release date.

This year the criteria included the economy, health, crime, housing, education, weather, transit, leisure and the arts, based on data gathered from a poll of its readers.

By those categories, Florida is hot in more than just the weather. Gainesville aside, four other Florida municipalities ranked in Money's Top 10. They were Jacksonville (No. 3), Ocala (5), Fort Lauderdale (6) and Naples (10).

"The prime reason: According to our data, no other part of the country has had such strong recent employment growth, stalling — yet still affordable — housing values and dazzling prospects for job creation," Money says in the cover story of its September issue.

That didn't stop cities in other regions from working their way into the Top 10. Rochester, Minn., last year's No. 2, retained that ranking. Seattle climbed from No. 8 to rank fourth.

The rest of the top 10: No. 7, Salem, N.H./Haverhill, Mass.; No. 8, Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill, N.C. — last year's No. 1 area; and Las Vegas at No. 9.

Last year's No. 300, Jackson, Mich., advanced to No. 222. Joining Yuba City at the bottom this year were: Glens Falls, N.Y. (No. 296); Peoria, Ill. (297); Birming-

ham, Ala. (298); and Modesto, Calif. (299).

The main focus of Money's list, however, was on the top cities. Gainesville, pop. 150,300 and home to the University of Florida, boasts an average of 242 sunny days a year and no state and local income tax.

Its sales tax is 6 percent and an average three-bedroom home costs \$82,000.

Driving Gainesville's economy is the university, which employs 16,500, including 4,100 at its Shands Teaching Hospital. Other employers include Bear Archery and Hunter Marine, a maker of sailboats.

Gainesville is still widely remembered for the stabbing-mutilation murders of the five college students, which garnered national attention and terrified residents before they were solved. A Times Mirror survey taken in 1990 showed it was the most widely followed domestic crime story that year.

Money points out, however, that the killings are viewed as an isolated incident and that the killer is now on death row.

"People we've talked to feel safe there," Eisenberg said. "They don't worry about it at all now."

Here's how Money ranks 300 metro areas

BY AP NEWSFEATURES	10. Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill, N.C. (1)	11. Tampa/St. Petersburg, Fla. (37)	12. Manchester, N.H. (79)	13. Daytona Beach, Fla. (74)	14. Sarasota/Breitbart, Fla. (125)	15. Charlottesville, Va. (77)	16. Madison, Wis. (10)	17. Orlando, Fla. (81)	18. Sioux Falls, S.D. (33)	19. Nashville, N.H. (18)	20. Lafayette, Ind. (33)	21. Pueblo, Colo. (18)	22. Pensacola, Fla. (72)	23. Grand Forks, N.D. (21)	24. San Francisco (13)	25. Fitchburg, Mass. (167)	26. W. Palm Beach, Fla. (160)	27. Greeley, Colo. (63)	28. Fort Walton Beach, Fla. (132)	29. Provo/Orem, Utah (3)	30. Fargo, N.D. (23)	31. Columbia, Mo. (20)	32. Fort Collins, Colo. (64)	33. Ann Arbor, Mich. (180)	34. Fort Myers/Cape Coral, Fla. (41)	35. Austin, Texas (17)	36. Portland, Ore. (24)	37. Denver (12)	38. Reno, Nev. (51)	39. F. Worth/Arlington, Tex. (91)	40. Waco, Texas (99)	41. Lakeland, Fla. (47)	42. Tacoma, Wash. (94)	43. Olympia, Wash. (57)	44. San Jose, Calif. (61)	45. Middletown, Conn. (148)	46. Minneapolis/St. Paul (32)	47. Benton Harbor (289)	48. Boulder, Colo. (62)	49. Flint, Mich. (297)	50. Fort Pierce, Fla. (97)	51. Tyler, Texas (119)	52. Sheboygan, Wis. (29)	53. Broward Co., Fla. (1132)	54. Muncie, Ind. (144)	55. Tallahassee (84)	56. Detroit (295)	57. Bloomington, Ind. (116)	58. Hagerstown, Md. (34)	59. Fayetteville, Ark. (313)	60. Tucson, Ariz. (19)	61. Punta Gorda, Fla. (83)	62. Salt Lake City/Ogden (4)	63. Bryan/Coleman Station, Texas (77)	64. Santa Rosa, Calif. (205)	65. Stamford/Norwalk, Conn. (1)	66. Eugene/Springfield, Ore. (107)	67. Miami (80)	68. Colorado Springs, Colo. (117)	69. Bremerton, Wash. (100)	70. Albuquerque, N.M. (101)	71. Lubbock, Texas (50)	72. Central New Jersey (53)	73. Joplin, Mo. (62)	74. Yuma, Ariz. (36)	75. Boston (22)	76. Springfield, Mo. (48)	77. Danvers, Va. (201)	78. Humana, La. (204)	79. Dothan, Ala. (111)	80. Brockton, Mass. (183)	81. Kalamazoo/Battle Creek (237)	82. Duluth, Minn. (87)	83. Brownsville, Texas (82)	84. Ventura, Calif. (61)	85. Leavenworth, Kan. (98)	86. San Diego (11)	87. New Orleans (182)	88. Orange County, Calif. (72)	89. Alexandria, Va. (195)	90. Greensboro/Winston-Salem, N.C. (69)	91. Phoenix (14)	92. Jackson, Miss. (122)	93. Amarillo, Texas (134)	94. Los Angeles/Long Beach (50)	95. Hamilton/Middletown, Ohio (187)	96. Lansing, Mich. (283)	97. Pittsburgh (53)	98. Longview, Texas (110)	99. Panama City, Fla. (106)	100. Sharon, Pa. (147)	101. Galveston, N.C. (94)	102. Honolulu (133)	103. Knoxville, Tenn. (196)	104. Macon, La. (154)	105. Newburgh, N.Y. (217)	106. Abilene, Texas (48)	107. Lake Charles, La. (266)	108. Hickory, N.C. (100)	109. Clarksville, Tenn. (130)	110. Santa Fe, N.M. (92)	111. Danbury, Conn. (70)	112. Florence, Ala. (137)	113. Baltimore (96)	114. Waterbury, Conn. (106)	115. Albany, Ga. (113)	116. San Luis Obispo, Calif. (45)	117. Santa Cruz, Calif. (134)	118. Riverside/San Bernardino, Calif. (86)	119. Portsmouth, N.H. (82)	120. Lincoln, Neb. (52)	121. Brainerd, Texas (58)	122. Grand Rapids/Muskegon (234)	123. Milwaukee (88)
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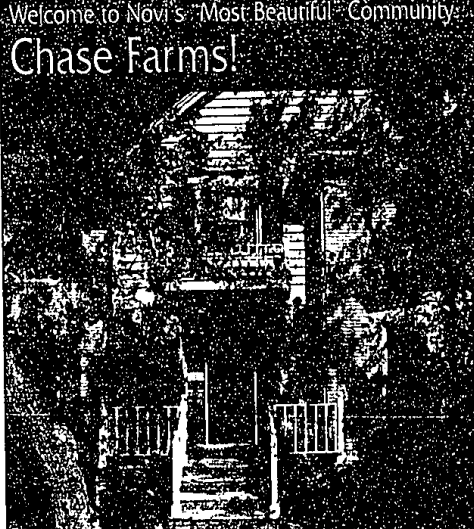
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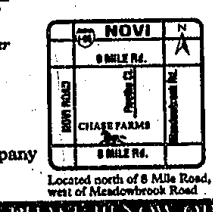
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