

A LONG-AWAITED GUIDE FROM FROMMER'S® RATES AND RANKS 403 CITIES

Charlottesville, VA Comes Out On Top

(NAPSA)—Virginians are sitting pretty. How about the people in your city?

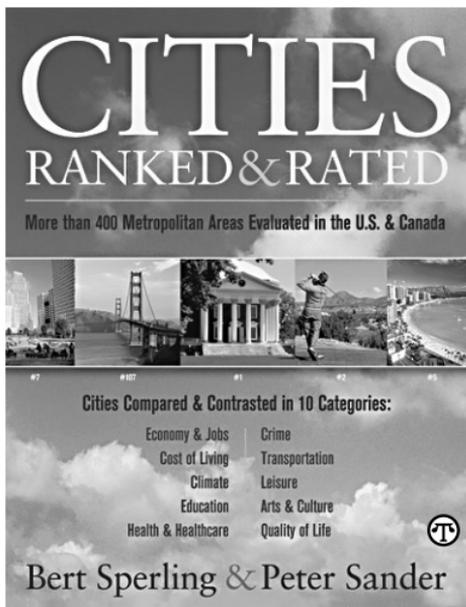
Analyzing more than 400 metro areas in the U.S. and Canada, the new book, "Cities Ranked & Rated" (Wiley, Inc., ISBN: 0-7645-2562-X; March 30, 2004; 832 pages; \$24.99) is the ultimate sourcebook for anyone looking to find the best place to live depending on specific criteria they are interested in.

This in-depth resource goes beyond other ranking systems, giving readers the power to find the city that's truly right for them. Each city is ranked on 10 major criteria: Economy & Jobs, Cost of Living, Climate, Education, Health & Healthcare, Crime, Transportation, Leisure, Arts & Culture, and overall quality of life.

This book finally boils down all the variables into an overall city rating. Charlottesville, VA comes out on top, followed by Santa Fe, NM at #2; San Luis Obispo-Atascadero-Paso Robles, CA at #3; Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-Lompoc, CA at #4; Honolulu, HI at #5; Ann Arbor, MI at #6; Atlanta, GA at #7; Asheville, NC at #8; Reno, NV at #9; and Corvallis, OR rounding out the top 10.

The nation's least desirable places to live, meanwhile, are Laredo, TX and Stockton-Lodi, CA, both of which score a 0 on Cities Ranked and Rated's 100-point scale. Laredo's "constant bustle, lack of intellectual stimulation, poverty, high crime rate and heat will try almost anyone's patience," the book's authors say.

Canada's number-one city is Vancouver, according to the book; Sudbury, ON languishes at the bottom of the Canadian pile.



The book is unique in that it examines the "quality of life" and the character of a place and not just cold, hard data. It also examines "crossover" qualities, i.e. "Climate Bargains" (low cost of living and favorable climate), Cultural Bargains (low cost of living and strong arts and culture assets), large cities with below average commute times and so forth.

This is a new direction for America's #1 publisher of travel guides. Since 1957, Frommer's has given travelers the inside scoop on what to do when they're away from home: now, the publisher is making sure travelers have the best possible place to come home to.

The book is written by Bert Sperling, one of the nation's top experts on places to live, and researcher and analyst Peter Sander. "Cities Ranked & Rated" is available in bookstores and online now. For more information visit www.frommers.com.