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## The Patriot-News

### Live it up! We made the list

**WE'RE NO. 12** Forbes.com's new list of "America's Most Livable Cities": 1. Portland, Maine 2. Bethesda, Md. 3. Des Moines, Iowa 4. Stamford, Conn. 5. Tulsa, Okla. 10. Pittsburgh 11. Denver, Colo. 12. Harrisburg/Carlisle

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**BY JOHN LUCIEW**

**Of The Patriot-News**

The Harrisburg region might not be as picturesque as Portland, Maine, as bustling as Bethesda, Md., or as cultured as Cambridge, Mass.

But the region had enough going for it to rank 12th on Forbes.com's new list of "America's Most Livable Cities."

The magazine ranked the largest continental U.S. cities based on five key measures of quality of life. Only metropolitan regions of 500,000 or larger were studied.

The greater Harrisburg area landed in 12th place, just behind Denver and Pittsburgh, which weighed in at 10th.

"Harrisburg is such a great city," said Samantha Elliott Krepps, communications specialist with the Pennsylvania Association of Realtors. "You have the architecture of the older homes and that beautiful state Capitol. You can go down to the Whitaker Center. You have Riverfront Park and so many amenities in one place. It is livable."

With Pittsburgh in 10th place and Harrisburg/Carlisle just two spots behind on the Forbes list, Krepps added, the rankings are an endorsement for Pennsylvania and its economy and real estate market.

"We haven't had the highs and lows, so it is more livable," she said. "Getting that nod from Forbes is a real tribute."

And it's not just an empty title.

Krepps said Pittsburgh's repeat appearances on most-livable lists have translated into a rebound for the former Steel City.

"I think more people are moving into the Pittsburgh area, and it is a stable community," she said.

David Black, president and CEO of the Harrisburg Regional Chamber, said Forbes' ranking is confirmation of what Harrisburg-area residents already know.

"Quality of life is good here," he said. "If you talk to people who have lived here, quality of life always comes into the conversation. It's easy to get around. It's a comfortable place to live. You have great amenities."

Black said the real value of the Forbes ranking will be as a marketing tool to attract businesses, especially

sought-after technology firms, which he said tend to take into account livability when selecting a location.

"We will push this out to people -- site selectors, deciders. It helps to put us on the map," Black said.

However, Bill Gladstone, a commercial real estate agent with the Bill Gladstone Group at NAI CIR, said he doesn't expect his phone to ring simply because of the list.

"In all the years I've been doing deals, quality of life never seems to be at the top of the list," he said of companies' reasons for locating here. "A lot of it is economics and location and the availability of the work force."

Although the Forbes ranking was for the larger Harrisburg region, not just the city, Mayor Stephen R. Reed wasted no time issuing a press release trumpeting the news.

"We are delighted to have been named America's 12th-most-livable city this year," Reed said, adding that the honor "comes as no small feat and is certainly no coincidence."

Reed, who is up for re-election, pointed out that, when he took over the city in 1981, its main claim to fame was as "the second-most-distressed city" in the U.S.

"A dramatic transformation has taken place that has turned Harrisburg into one of this region's most sought-after places to live, work and play," he said. "Each and every day, more and more people are finding out that Harrisburg is a vibrant, cost-effective and beautiful place in which to live."

JOHN LUCIEW: 255-8171 or [jluciew@patriot-news.com](mailto:jluciew@patriot-news.com)

#### **ABOUT THE RANKINGS**

Forbes.com assigned points to metro regions based on five-year income growth per household and cost of living from Moody's Economy.com; crime data and the leisure index from Sperling's Best Places; and unemployment numbers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Greater Harrisburg, with a metro population of 532,000, had the following:

- Income growth of 2.4 percent.
- Cost-of-living Index of 89.7.
- Culture index of 62.
- Crime per 100,000 population of 2,342.
- Unemployment rate of 6.7 percent. On the Net: [www.forbes.com/2009/04/01/cities-city-ten-lifestyle-real-estate-livable-cities.html](http://www.forbes.com/2009/04/01/cities-city-ten-lifestyle-real-estate-livable-cities.html)

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