

The Salt Lake Tribune

Utah cities are some of the “best places to live”

By Katie Drake

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Jim Urquhart | The Salt Lake Tribune Play time at the dog park in West Jordan. Residents of South Jordan and West Jordan are living in two of America’s best small cities, according to Money magazine.

Residents of South Jordan and West Jordan are living in two of America’s best small cities, according to Money magazine.

The two recently made the list of the 100 best small cities to live in, with South Jordan taking top honors for Utah at No. 18. West Jordan came in at No. 61. Orem and St. George also made the list at 45 and 80, respectively.

The cities beat out more than 600 other towns with populations of between 50,000 and 300,000 for the honor, according to Money’s reporting. Selected cities had low crime rates, affordable housing, quality schools and a diverse mix of people and leisure activities.

Being named to the list is a powerful recruiting tool, said Brian Preece, South Jordan’s director of economic development. Most people outside Utah have not heard of South Jordan, Preece said, which can be a hurdle when trying to recruit businesses. Still, the former bedroom community has become a large employment center for companies such as eBay.

“It helps us validate when we recruit” new businesses, Preece said. “They can live, work and play.”

Rapid growth has benefited both cities, and the magazine cited them for managing that growth responsibly. Interstate 15 used to be seen as the center of the Salt Lake Valley, Preece said, but the expansion of subdivisions like Daybreak calls attention to the booming west side.

Growth is one of the factors that drew Dan and Jean Park to South Jordan 12 years ago. The couple were attracted to the bigger lots — and bigger homes — new developments had to offer. The neighborhoods are well planned, Dan Park said, and offer plenty of recreation opportunities like parks and swimming pools. The Parks liked the area so much they recommended it to their children, who moved to West Jordan several years ago, bringing the couple’s three granddaughters close enough to visit several times a week.

School was the big draw for Vinessa Baldwin and her two children. She moved to West Jordan to be near the Salt Lake Community College campus. As a renter, she likes the variety of available housing options and said most of the apartment complexes are nicer than those in older areas of the valley.

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See the full list

The list of Money’s best small cities to live in can be viewed online at tinyurl.com/2u4zdc3. It will be published in the August edition of the magazine.

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