

100 LEADING LOCATIONS for 2011

DESIRABLE PLACES
FOR DOING
BUSINESS

As business populations shift and site selection continuously evolves, smaller regional and metro areas are emerging as desirable locations for companies of all sizes. This year, in concert with *Area Development's* annual state-level Gold and Silver Shovel Awards, we also examined the performances of these locales.

We based our findings on 14 highly regarded location surveys from sources including *Forbes*, *Newgeography*, *Brookings MetroMonitor*, *Fast Company*, and *CNNMoney*. We used the findings of the Milken Institute's Best Performing Cities 2010 as the primary criterion. Each of the 100 Leading Locations on our list must appear within the top 100 rankings for large and small cities on Milken's report.

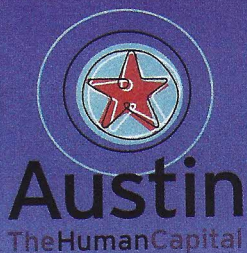
We also considered the results of our own Select Regionals Survey as a criterion to select the 100 locations that made the final cut. This survey, sent to nearly 300 U.S. regions and metros, considered the areas' top three greatest project investments of 2010, unemployment rates, and total capital investment pledged over the past year.

While our list does not rank the locales, we have chosen to highlight five that appeared on most of the lists we considered. With a total of 10 mentions across the 14 lists in our review, Austin, Texas, was the most named Leading Location. Regardless of how many lists an area appeared on, they all represent some of the best-performing locations during this recession-to-recovery period.

Please use the key below to match the cities to the respective lists on which they appear.

KEY to SURVEYS

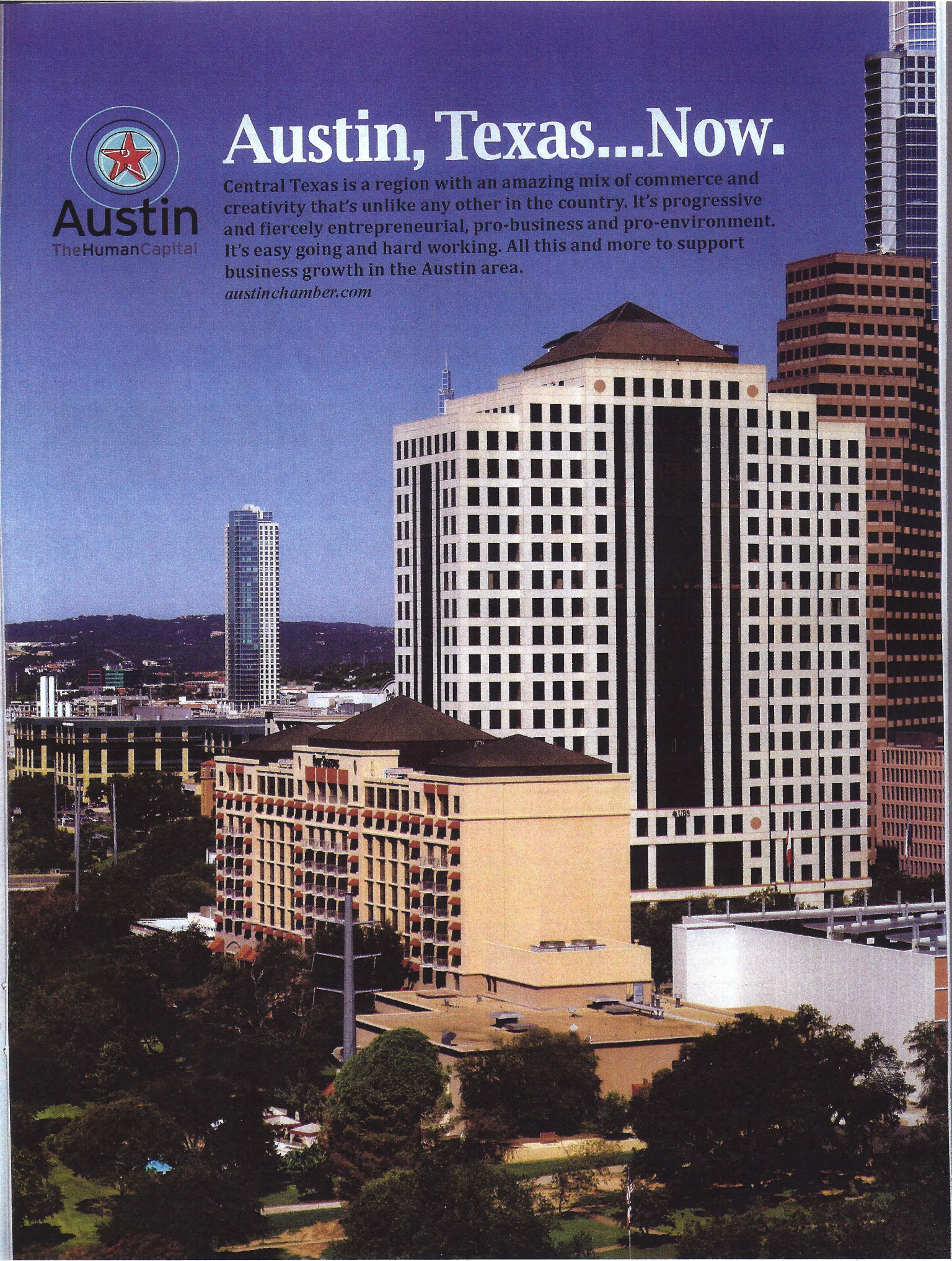
- | | |
|--|--|
| a Milken Institute: Best Performing Cities 2010 | h <i>Forbes</i> : Best Places for Business and Careers |
| b <i>Brookings MetroMonitor</i> | i <i>Relocate America</i> : Top 10 Recovery Cities for 2010 |
| c CIO: Top 10 Cities for Technology Jobs | j <i>Newgeography</i> : Best Cities for Job Growth (Top 25) |
| d <i>Forbes</i> : The Best Cities for Jobs | k <i>Forbes</i> : America's Most Innovative Cities |
| e GigaCom: Top 10 Cities with the Best Broadband | l <i>CNNMoney</i> : Best Places to Live |
| f <i>Fast Company</i> : Fast Cities of 2011 | m <i>Forbes</i> : Most Wired Cities |
| g <i>Newgeography</i> : America's Biggest Brain Magnets | n <i>Area Development</i> : Select Regionals Survey |



Austin, Texas...Now.

Central Texas is a region with an amazing mix of commerce and creativity that's unlike any other in the country. It's progressive and fiercely entrepreneurial, pro-business and pro-environment. It's easy going and hard working. All this and more to support business growth in the Austin area.

austinchamber.com



1ST On 10 Surveys Austin, Texas

a b d f g h i j k m

As the capital of the Lone Star State — itself well known for its business-friendly policies — **Austin** stands out. For companies large and small, the metro area has been a sound choice for expansions and relocations. And its businesses consistently push boundaries, creating high-tech and cutting-edge innovations that, in turn, spur even more investment.

Samsung's announcement of a \$3.6 billion investment in its Samsung Austin Semiconductor (SAS) plant was the year's biggest news, according to Dave Porter, senior vice president of economic development for the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce. SAS will increase the capacity of its 12-inch semiconductor fabrication facility in the city, creating up to 500 permanent jobs.

"This investment, along with the creation of Samsung Austin Semiconductor's first research and development entity this spring, makes the Austin campus a true semiconductor complex and ensures Austin's premier status as a center for semiconductor research and manufacturing," said Dr. W. S. Han, SAS president.



Austin's robust tech work force will fulfill these jobs. According to the Census, the area has the sixth most educated work force in the nation. Porter says its highly educated potential employees are the top reason companies choose to relocate and grow in Austin. Many workers filter into the city's labor pool via the University of Texas at Austin, the state university system's flagship school, which has more than 48,000 students.

While Austin leads today, success didn't happen overnight. The chamber developed Opportunity Austin, a strategic plan to diversify the area's economy, in 2004 after the 2000–2002 tech bust, which impacted Austin's software and semiconductor businesses. Focusing on attracting clean energy companies, life science firms, creative media, and niche headquarters has strengthened Austin's economy. For instance, Hanger Orthopedics moved its headquarters to the city last year, bringing 280 jobs with it. "That's the perfect fit we're looking for," Porter says.

Today, industry group BioAustin represents approximately 100 life sciences companies that employ more than 7,000 people in Austin and central Texas. These businesses span fields from medical device manufacturing to agricultural biology.

Aggressive incentives and business-friendly taxes are just two more reasons why companies locate here. State business taxes are relatively low and local incentives range from tax abatement to public utility incentives and foreign-trade zones.

But one of the single most important strategies Austin has implemented is encouraging local CEOs to talk to other executives about the benefits of relocating to the area.

"It's not brain surgery," Porter says. "It just comes down to building relationships."

Looking forward, the chamber is working on the second phase of Opportunity Austin, a five-year plan that runs from 2009–2013. The goal is to attract 117,000 net new jobs that represent a nearly \$11 billion wage increase. Based on its success over the past decade, Austin is poised to continue its economic ascent.

On 8 Surveys

Denver, Colorado

a b e f g h j m

Seattle, Washington

a c f g h i k m

On 7 Surveys

Raleigh-Durham Area, North Carolina

a b g h j k m

On 6 Surveys

Boston, Massachusetts

a c f j k m

Charlotte, North Carolina

a b f h m n

Dallas, Texas

a b c d f j

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

a b e f j n

San Antonio, Texas

a b d h i j

On 5 Surveys

Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, Texas

a d f j n

Lincoln, Nebraska

a d f h j

New York Metro Area

a c e f j

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

a b e j n

Salt Lake City, Utah

a b h j n

OPELIKA ALABAMA

We have sites worth seeing.

- ▶ Located in East Central Alabama along Interstate 85 halfway between Montgomery and Atlanta
- ▶ Part of Alabama's fastest growing metropolitan statistical area
- ▶ Available 2,200-acre fully developed industrial park along Interstate 85 with sites ranging from 10 to 1,100 acres
- ▶ Near Auburn University, with more than 25,000 students
- ▶ Close to local community college with an excellent industrial training center

**100
LEADING
LOCATIONS
for 2011**

AREADEVELOPMENT

AREADEVELOPMENT

2011

Silver Shovel
Award Winner



**OPELIKA
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

Lori Huguley, CEcD • Director
lhuguley@ci.opelika.al.us
334.705.5115
www.opelika.org

On 4 Surveys

Albuquerque, New Mexico

a b i j

Anchorage, Alaska

a d f j

Baltimore-Towson, Maryland

a b f m

Bismarck, North Dakota

a d h i

Bloomington, Indiana

a d h i

Boulder, Colorado

a f h i

College Station-Bryan, Texas

a h j n

Colorado Springs, Colorado

a h m n

On 3 Surveys

Ames, Iowa

a h i

Augusta Area, Georgia

a b j

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

a d j

Bethesda-Rockville-Frederick, Maryland

a j m

Buffalo-Niagara Falls, New York

a j n

Charleston, South Carolina

a b j

Corpus Christi, Texas

a d j

Council Bluffs, Iowa

a d j

Des Moines-West Des Moines, Iowa

a d j

