



**For Immediate Release
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Moore County, NC

Southern Pines – Pinehurst Area Ranked #2 “Dreamtown” in NC, 35th in the Nation

The Southern Pines-Pinehurst area has once again received national accolades as one of the nation’s most desirable places to live.

Following on the heels of independent research firm POLICOM’s recent 2008 ranking of the area as 27th in Economic Strength out of 577 micropolitan areas in the United States, American City Business Journals (ACBJ) has ranked Southern Pines-Pinehurst as the No. 2 best “Dreamtown” in North Carolina and the 35th best in the nation out of 140 smaller communities evaluated throughout the United States.

ACBJ is the largest publisher of metropolitan business newsweeklies in the United States. The company manages 41 papers, including Triangle Business Journal covering the Raleigh-Durham area, in addition to several magazines.

ACBJ’s study looked at communities with populations of more than 10,000, but less than 50,000 to identify the nation’s most attractive areas based on quality of life criteria. It gave the highest scores to those with less traffic congestion, solid economies, moderate costs of living, strong educational systems, and easy access to the offerings and attractions of metropolitan areas.

“Moore County is fortunate to have all of those attributes, in addition to exceptional healthcare, low property taxes, low crime, and a wide variety of local cultural and recreational opportunities”, said Ray Ogden, Executive Director of Moore County Partners in Progress, the economic development organization serving all of Moore County. “From an economic development standpoint, we’ve found that the businesses and industries we target for recruitment often rate an area’s ‘livability’ as even more important than incentives, workforce, or other needs.”

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Only one other area in North Carolina was placed in the top 50 nation-wide: Statesville-Mooresville at No. 27. The Southern Pines-Pinehurst area's position at No. 35 is an impressive climb up from being ranked at No. 60 just two years ago.

The 2008 ranking was based on selected statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2006 American Community Survey. Ogden cited several of the statistics used:

- Population Growth since 2000: Moore County's 2006 estimated population was 83,162, reflecting an average growth rate of 1.7% annually since 2000.
- Median Household Income of \$43,616, which has increased 5.8% from 2000.
- Median House Value of \$155,900 for single-family, owner-occupied homes, which has increased 18.9% from 2000.
- Percentage of residents with home ownership = 76.5%.
- Percentage of labor force employed in management and professional jobs = 29.4%.
- Percentage of adults 25 years and older with bachelor degrees = 25.9%.

"This ranking just affirms what residents already know about Moore County – that it's a great place to live, work and play", Ogden said. "Partners in Progress will continue to promote the enviable quality of life here as Moore County's best asset."

Partners in Progress is the economic development organization that serves all of Moore County to improve the quality of life for our citizens through new business recruitment and existing business expansion. For more information, visit www.moorebusiness.org.

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