

Rochester - "Poised for Greatness"

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Rochester, N.Y.-- For Pennsylvania native, Aaron Thompson, the decision to stay in Rochester after graduating from RIT was an easy one.

He loved his new job, the city and everything it had to offer.

So he's not surprised the city was recently ranked by The Street, a financial news website, as one poised for greatness in 2012. Rochester was on the list along with bigger cities like Indianapolis, San Jose and even London, England.

"I think that Rochester has a lot to offer," Thompson says. "I don't think people realize that."

This latest accolade is just one of more than 20 the city has received from national publications and websites over the past year or so.

For example, Forbes ranked Rochester first on the "Best Places to Buy a Home" list. MSN says Rochester is at the top of the nation when it comes to "Most Livable Bargain Markets". [Business Facilities](#) says the area is a "Top Region for Job Growth".

When looking at one list it may not mean much, but according to Mark [Peterson](#) of Greater Rochester Enterprise, the compiled list of lists is impressive.

"[The lists] really begins to tell the story about our region," Peterson says. "It's a very diverse economy, with a smart workforce. There's real opportunity for growth and success in business and quality of life."

Peterson thinks Rochester is getting attention recently because people are realizing its stability.

"[Rochester] is a very, very stable economy," he says. "We don't have the big highs or the big lows. We're very resilient and we respond well in a recessionary period. We also have lower unemployment than other places."

Laura Pearson of Chili agrees. She moved here 25 years ago from Syracuse to study at Nazareth. She loved the area so much, she never left.

Pearson believes that despite the fact that some of Rochester's bigger companies are struggling, there is still much to look forward to.

"We still have a lot of strong [companies](#) here," she points out. "There's Wegmans, the [University of Rochester](#) and Strong Hospital. There are a lot of things keeping Rochester going and growing into the future."

In fact, the same day Rochester made the list as a city "poised for greatness" the University of Rochester, the area's largest employer, announced they broke the 20,000-employee mark. At the end of 2011, UR said they had 20,340 employees. That's 353 more than last year.

Ellen Rosen of the Rochester Business Alliance says a recent survey of local employers showed optimism for job growth.

"2010 was better than 2009 and 2011 was better than 2010," she says. "People are feeling that 2012 is going to be better than 2011 as well."

She says she's not surprised to see that the region is getting attention.

"We don't boom and bust like a lot of other communities do," Rosen says. "Our housing prices stayed the same. We didn't have the mortgage crisis and we didn't have a lot of the other things that dragged communities down."

Rosen says one of the biggest challenges is convincing Rochester's *own* residents to realize the region's successes and appeal.

"We Rochesterians are going to be a lot tougher on our community than outsiders are. People move here from other areas and say 'You know, this is really an amazing place to live'. We get down on ourselves more than we should."

Thompson agrees.

“Sometimes it takes an outsider to come in and recognize what a great thing you have. We are our own worst enemy. I think belief in the city and belief in what we can do here is the biggest thing we can do for our city.”

National Accolades for Rochester in 2011/2012

Forbes- #1 Best Place to Buy a Home

Forbes- #3 Best Place in the Country to Raise a Family

Forbes- #7 Most Affordable City in America

Forbes- #14 Most Innovative City in the US

The Atlantic- One of 35 Innovation Hubs in the Country

Fox News Channel- Best Place for Single Moms

Brookings- Top 20 Economy in the Nation

Kiplinger- Best City in the US for Commuters

The Daily Beast- America's 10th Smartest City

The Street- 10 Cities Poised for Greatness in 2012

MSN- Most Livable Bargain Market

Newsweek- 10 Greater Rochester high schools among 35 of “America's Best High Schools”

Business Facilities- Top Region for Job Growth

Business Facilities- Editor's Top 7 Location Picks

Business Facilities- #3 Best Food Processing Region in US

Business Facilities- #7 Best Medical Devices and Equipment Region in US

Bloomberg Businessweek- #15 Strongest Job Market in America

Bloomberg Businessweek- #16 Best Place to Start Over