



Sugar Land Ranks Eighth in Nation as 'Best of the Best' Places to Raise a Family



PHOTO: A family visits with a Sugar Land police officer while enjoying a day at the park.

Sugar Land, TX. - Where's the best place to raise your family in America today, as well as being an affordable community?

The recently released first edition of *Best Places to Raise Your Family: The Top 100 Affordable Communities* (Wiley, May 2006) in the United States ranked Sugar Land eight in the Best of the Best top ten category.

The towns were determined by demographics, standard of living, education, lifestyle, health and safety.

"This 'Best of the Best' recognition is a well-deserved honor for our residents," said City Manager Allen Bogard. "We have an unparalleled quality of life. I am

pleased that facts, local interviews and professional evaluation of our City places us in the top 10 in America."

Best Places to Raise Your Family highlights 100 areas across the United States based on a ranking that includes property values, average incomes, school systems, nearby leisure activities and more. The list is further refined into the top 10 areas in each category.

Sugar Land was judged "Best of the Best" in "Standard of Living," "Education," "Health and Safety" and "Lifestyle." The City placed in the top 10 for both "Standard of Living" and "Education."

The "Standard of Living" category was determined by comparing incomes, home prices and other costs, including gas, taxes and childcare. In addition to providing statistics on income levels, the authors compiled and analyzed facts about job security, local companies and future employment potential.

The "Education" category evaluated school test results and educational standards based on such criteria such as the number of adults with college degrees and the amount of money spent per student.

Rankings in the demographic analysis identified Sugar Land as the third fastest growing community in the nation with a 96.4 percent growth rate (as compared to the national average of 14.9 percent) for the 15-year period from 1990 to 2004.

Sugar Land also maintained third place for population growth for the most recent five-year period of 2000-2004 with a 24.9 percent growth rate. Further evaluation of Sugar Land's population ranked the City as the ninth most diverse community in the United States. The City also ranked in the top 10 in "Median Household Income" and "Household Income" greater than \$100,000. "Cost of Living" compared to income levels in an area -- also referenced as Buying Power Index (BPI) -- ranked Sugar Land as the second Best BPI in the nation.

Regarding future growth projections, Sugar Land was ranked second in the nation for future job growth for the next five years (2006 to 2010). These projections were derived from long-term economic growth trends in the area and other economic factors. Sugar Land is described as the "newer powerhouse"

suburb because of its attractive location, excellent workforce and strong economic development efforts. These economic indicators -- coupled with Sugar Land's ranking of ninth for the "Highest Level of Educational Attainment" in its workforce with 59 percent of four-year "College Degrees and Graduate Degrees" -- positions the community's continued positive business growth for the next five years.

Located in the southwest portion of the Houston MSA, Sugar Land is a planned community recognized as one of the fastest growing cities in the State of Texas and the U.S. Sugar Land's favorable business climate touts a highly educated workforce and over 3 million sq. ft. of Class A office space in its Central Business District. The City has invested over \$90 million in economic development funds on projects and business incentives since 1993. Sugar Land's Economic Development Department's initiatives and programs over the past two years have created over 1,200 new jobs, over 500 retained jobs and over \$250 million in new capital investment. This award winning community was recently rated by CNN Money/ Money Magazine as one of the top 50 places to live in the U.S.