



Foreign trade mag picks Surprise as Top 10 'City of Future'

Tony Lombardo

The Arizona Republic

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There's no time machine to prove it, but a foreign investment trade magazine has dubbed Surprise a "North American City of the Future."

Foreign Direct Investment magazine, or *fDi*, has ranked the city seventh in the Top 10 "micro" cities of the future with a population of 100,000 or fewer.

"It sends a message to businesses that this is a place you might want to take another look at," Surprise Economic Development Director John Hagen said.

The magazine's "Cities, Regions and Countries of the Future Competition" has existed for five years. The publication is part the London-based Financial Times Group, a unit of Pearson PLC, and caters to professionals in the global market.

The magazine ranks "North American Cities of the Future" every two years, with selections made by an independent panel of experts.

Hagen said he welcomes any foreign interest from Surprise's recognition.

"I'm a patriotic person and I'd like to repatriate those dollars we've been sending overseas," he said.

He points to several reasons for Surprise's ranking, including brand-new infrastructure, a growing labor force, competitive land prices and an accessible rail system.

Now that the population of Surprise has reached 100,000, the city probably will face competition from bigger cities in the coming years, Hagen added.

Yuma ranked fourth in the list of North American cities with 100,000 residents or fewer. The complete list is:

1. Zapata, Texas.{check}
2. Ennis, Texas
3. Sarnia, Ontario.
4. Yuma.

5. Wilmington, Del.

6. Silverthorne, Colo.

7. Surprise.

8. Fredericton, New Brunswick.

9. Plattsburgh, N.Y.

10. Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Surprise ranked higher in four subcategories: first for "Best development and investment promotion," second for "Best infrastructure," third for "Best quality of life," and third for "Most business-friendly."

Reach the reporter at (602) 444-6912.



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