

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA, AGAIN TOPS *FORBES*' RANKING FOR BEST CITIES FOR BUSINESS AND CAREERS

New York, NY (March 19, 2008) — As companies in the U.S. face challenges from the credit crunch and soaring commodity prices, *Forbes* has ranked the 200 largest metro areas based on which ones are the Best Places for Business and Careers in the country (**Hot Spots, p. 97**). The Southeast is home to half of the top ten for a third straight year, with Raleigh, NC, again ranked #1 this year. Common themes for metro areas *Forbes* considers to be welcoming for business include solid job growth, an educated labor supply and low business costs. New cities toward the top of the list this year include Lexington, KY, Atlanta, GA, and Richmond, VA. Six of the ten metro areas are anchored by capital cities, suggesting lobbyist-spending may boost local economies. Criteria for rankings are: job and income growth; business and living costs; education of the workforce; migration trends; and quality-of-life issues, such as crime rates and cultural opportunities.

2008 Top Ten Places for Business and Careers

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| 1. Raleigh, North Carolina (#1, 2007) | 6. Atlanta, Georgia (#25, 2007) |
| 2. Boise, Idaho (#3, 2007) | 7. Richmond, Virginia (#14, 2007) |
| 3. Fort Collins, Colorado (#28, 2007) | 8. Olympia, Washington (#10, 2007) |
| 4. Des Moines, Iowa (#4, 2007) | 9. Spokane, Washington (#20, 2007) |
| 5. Lexington, Kentucky (#30, 2007) | 10. Knoxville, Tennessee (#5, 2007) |

After 6 p.m. ET, for details on the full rankings, including 179 Smaller Metro Areas, the best markets for buying foreclosed homes, and more, visit: <http://www.forbes.com/bestplaces/>

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

No Thain, No Gain (p. 76) – John Thain is the man who saved the New York Stock Exchange, putting back together a storied institution rocked by scandal. Replacing Stan O’Neal, who was ousted late last year, will Thain’s cool-headed approach revive Merrill Lynch?

Fire Sale (p. 40) – As banks seize more properties, *Forbes* reports that banks in some communities are now throwing in the towel and starting to cut deals. If the trend spreads, it could mean the crisis in housing finance could come to a peaceful conclusion without any taxpayer bailout.

When Blood is on the Street (p. 34) – JPMorgan’s Jamie Dimon may prove to be the latest in a line of investors to turn panic into profits. *Forbes* examines this risky business.

Discount Chic (p. 108) – Retail is among the most damaged sectors in the current downturn, so Kohl’s department store is classing up their offerings with high-end names, such as Vera Wang (women’s fashion), Bobby Flay (kitchenware) and Tony Hawk (shoes).

Contact: Elizabeth Wasden at (212) 367-4157 or ewasden@forbes.com.