



Austin's economic vital signs are strong; local running stores go east, north



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Austin comes out No. 1 again on economic vitality index

The clouds are gathering over the national economy, but the forecast is better for the Austin area.

For the second time this year, the metropolitan area has come out No. 1 in a ranking of 381 cities based on their economic vitality.

Moody's economy.com rates the cities based not only on what's happening now, but the near-term outlook and potential risk factors.

Austin came out ahead on factors including the high quality of its work force, its strong base of innovation and population growth.

A potential downside: the cost of housing.

"We are clearly seeing a bit of a slowdown nationally, but so far that has not impacted Austin's ability to attract top-level talent and plenty of private investment," said Betty Voights, executive director of the Capital Area Council of Governments.

Austin ranked No. 7 in the March index, then rose to first place in July and held on to the top spot in the December report.

The next index comes out in the spring.

East Austin retail store will be up and running soon

Retailing is thriving in East Austin, between the growing collection of major stores at Mueller and the proliferation of locally owned spots closer to downtown.

Come February, east-siders will have their own running store.

Steve Sisson and Ruth England, owners of Rogue Training Systems, are teaming up with Bettysport to open Rogue Equipment, which will be next door to Progress Coffee at Fifth and San Marcos streets.

Bettysport, with two Austin locations, sells fitness attire for women.

Meanwhile, RunTex, the region's only local running chain, has opened the doors of its newest location, on Georgetown's historic square. The grand opening will be next month. Owner Paul Carrozza has another outlet in the works.

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