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Report: Austin among best performing U.S. metros

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Austin and San Antonio will be the first two U.S. cities to recover from the recession, according to a new national forecast from IHS Global Insight.

The forecast from the Lexington, Mass. economic research firm suggests the two Texas cities will bounce back to their pre-recession job levels sometime next year.

Eight other metropolitan areas are predicted to recover by 2011, a group that includes Texas' two largest markets, Dallas-Fort Worth and Houston, along with Washington, D.C.

IHS Global Insight said most metros will start adding employment next year, but the increases are likely to be tepid. "Solid gains will not return for the majority of the country until 2011," the report said.

Austin is also named one of the 20 best performing metropolitan areas in the second quarter of 2009, according to a study by the Brookings Institution.

The second quarter MetroMonitor report tracked nine metrics in 100 U.S. metro areas, and found Austin was a leader in many of those, from percent change in gross metropolitan product to percent change in housing prices.

Employment in Austin fell 0.5 percent from its pre-recession peak, that was the second-narrowest gap in the nation. The Texas Capital was also one of only three metro areas that surpassed their pre-recession peak output by the second quarter of 2009. Along with the other two cities, McAllen and Washington D.C., **Austin was one of those least affected by the downturn.**

The report's authors said the figures reveal some stark differences in economic performance among metro areas.

"Signs at the national level that job and income losses are slowing continue to mask the highly variable performance of individual metropolitan economies," said Alan Berube, co-author of the report. "While several metro areas may have reached a turning point, there are many others that still have not touched bottom, as well as a few that have almost fully recovered."

Texas had the strongest showing, with six cities among the 20 strongest metro areas: Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Houston, McAllen and San Antonio. Florida dominated the list of the 20 weakest metro areas with eight, including Bradenton, Cape Coral, Lakeland, Miami, Orlando, Palm Bay and Tampa.

For the full report, click [here](#).