

America's Best Places to Live 2008

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No 7: Round Rock, Texas



Courtesy: City of Round Rock

Population: 92,400

Miles from Austin: 17

Typical single-family home: \$192,500

Job growth since 2000: 46.8%

Pros: Affordable homes, loads of outdoor amenities

Con: One employer dominates the economy

When Walter Rock, 49, moved here in 1990, he says, the biggest entertainment was watching people play dominoes in front of the gas station. Now, says the engineer turned real estate agent, "I rarely have to leave Round Rock for anything."

Once merely a bedroom community of Austin, Round Rock today is very much its own city thanks largely to three things: affordable housing, excellent schools and computer maker Dell, which has established its headquarters here.

The city boasts three medical centers and a campus of Texas State University. There's a lot of shopping, from an IKEA to a premium outlet mall, and a minor league baseball team, the Round Rock Express. Residents enjoy more than 800 acres of open space, two golf courses and 64-mile-long Lake Travis, just west of the city.

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Courtesy of JB Goodwin