

Forbes: Auburn-Opelika metro area is one of America's best small cities for jobs

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Auburn University's Samford Hall

AUBURN, Ala. — The Auburn-Opelika Metro area has been named by Forbes Magazine as the seventh best small city for jobs in the country. Financial analysts from the magazine's online website evaluated 421 metropolitan statistical areas and ranked them based on employment growth over the short-, medium- and long-term, going back to 2003, and momentum — whether growth is slowing or accelerating.

The south Alabama area listed 60,700 jobs in 2014 and continues to boom. The cities have seen expansion with the help of the growth from Auburn University, which has attracted many skilled students from both in and out of state. Earlier this year, Payscale.com listed the school as the third best return on investment value for in-state students, and the fourth best for out-of-state.

The economists at Forbes note that small and medium size cities have seen tremendous job growth recently at the expense of larger metropolises. Areas such as California and the Northeast have become increasingly regulated, losing business to parts of the South and Midwest.

However, the growth of these areas is not infinite and can end if the right steps are not taken. “It will take determination on the part of local leaders and residents to begin expanding their economic strategy beyond any one niche, and instead develop a growth economy that can insulate themselves from the downturns that affect any single industry over time,” Joel Kotkin and Michael Shires argue. However, Auburn and many other small cities across the south have put themselves in great position for the future.

Here is the rest of the top ten small cities for jobs according to Forbes:

1. Midland, Texas. 98,600 jobs
2. Greeley, CO. 101,500 jobs
3. Odessa, Texas. 81,700 jobs
4. Naples-Immokalee-Marco Island, Fla. 136,200 jobs
5. Columbus, IN. 51,800 jobs
6. Fargo, ND-MN. 140,200 jobs
- 7. Auburn-Opelia, Ala. 60,700 jobs**
8. Napa, CA. 69,500 jobs
9. Gainesville, Ga. 135, 200 jobs
10. Ames, Iowa. 53,600 jobs