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Ithaca tops new list of 'emerging' U.S. cities

Study of recently tapped metro areas thrills officials

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ITHACA -- Charlottesville, Va., may be the best place to live in the USA, according to a recent study, but Ithaca ranked first in a new category of best "emerging" areas.

In "Cities Ranked & Rated," authors Bert Sperling and Peter Sander analyzed 331 metropolitan statistical areas, including those that extend beyond city, county and even state borders. They created separate rankings for the 45 new "metropolitan statistical areas" -- most experiencing rapid growth -- that the federal government designated last year.

Ithaca was noted as "attractive, activities are plentiful, and education attainment is high," but with "lots of snow and precipitation."

City and county officials were pleasantly surprised by the news.

"Wow!" said Mayor Carolyn Peterson. "That's pretty exciting to be chosen as No. 1." Peterson said she thinks the study's portrayal of the area was accurate. She noted the



BILL WARREN/Journal Staff

Members of the Cascadilla Boat Club row along Cayuga Inlet Tuesday afternoon with the skyline of Cornell University above. Ithaca was ranked as the best "emerging" city in the country, according to "Cities Ranked & Rated".

'Emerging' cities

"Cities Ranked & Rated" top 10:

- No. 1. Ithaca
- No. 2. Bend, Ore.:
- No. 3. Mount Vernon-Anacortes, Wash.
- No. 4. Logan, Utah:

attempts to balance development and natural beauty, and the wide variety of cultural events.

"We are always trying to make our community attractive," she said.

Jean McPheeters, president of the Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce, said studies that show Ithaca "to be what all of us know it is -- gorges" usually result in phone calls from people looking to relocate here.

"We're certainly extremely excited," she said.

All the exciting things that make up Ithaca -- including its colleges, natural beauty, outdoor activities, cultural diversity and independent workers and artists -- have contributed to the city's success, McPheeters said.

But Peterson said she wasn't so sure that Ithaca's cold, snowy winters are a downfall. She said the area is lucky to be able to offer fun winter activities such as skiing, snowmobiling and even ice climbing.

McPheeters also saw the precipitation as a benefit.

"It makes for much better kayaking," she said.

Gannett News Service contributed to this article.

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- No. 10. Idaho Falls, Idaho

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