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Worldwide ERC® & Primacy Relocation Name 2005's "Best Cities for Relocating Families" in U.S.

SAN DIEGO – [May 19, 2005] - Worldwide ERC® (the Employee Relocation Council) and Primacy Relocation announced this week that Washington, D.C.; Boulder, Colorado; and Athens, Georgia, are 2005's Best Cities for Relocating Families™ among large, medium and small U.S. metropolitan areas. The two organisations worked with [Bert Sperling of Sperling's BestPlaces](#) to rate cities

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based on those factors – short-term and long-term – that determine the likelihood of a successful relocation.

The results changed from last year's study when Sperling and Primacy's research team broadened their definition of the American family to include elder-care and assisted-living statistics from the federal government's Administration on Aging. Every year, research shows that American transferees place an increasing priority on finding safe and meaningful care for their aging parents.

Worldwide ERC Executive Vice President H. Cris Collie, CAE, said, "Relocations occur for business reasons, but more and more often, they succeed because of a combination of family needs that are met."

The study [lists the top 50 U.S. cities](#) in their population categories, based in part on indicators familiar to all city rankings, such as cost of living, taxes, home costs/appreciation, schools, and climate. The rankings also consider criteria often overlooked, but helpful to have, once a family actually moves to one of these "best cities."

"Even the best relocation benefit programmes can't ease all the burden of bureaucratic hassles and unexpected fees," said Primacy CEO Matt Spinolo. "So we factored in such elements as commute times, and out-of-state tuition rules at local universities—and now we take a close

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look at how well each state monitors long-term care facilities."

ERC and Primacy announced the results of the survey at the National Relocation Conference in San Diego, California. Full results of the survey are available at www.primacy.com and will be published by the ERC in *MOBILITY* magazine this summer.

Worldwide ERC® is the membership association of choice for more than 10,000 corporate and government relocation managers, real estate companies, appraisers, and a range of service firms and individuals from industries that address relocation-related workforce issues.

Primacy Relocation is a full-service relocation provider, addressing both U.S.-based and global needs for companies around the world, including home sales, destination services, household goods move management, programme administration, and international assignment (expatriate) support. In addition to its Memphis headquarters, Primacy has offices in Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Omaha, Sacramento and Washington, D.C.; as well as Basel, Geneva, Lausanne, London, Montréal, Munich, Neuchâtel, Shanghai and Zurich. Primacy is online (in eight languages) at www.primacy.com.

Research Notes: As noted above, new criteria for the 2005 Best U.S. Cities for Relocating Families included nuanced climate criteria to give value to those cities where mild winters, mild summers, and plentiful rainfall combine to keep utility prices reasonable. We also included elder-care and assisted-living statistics from the federal Administration on Aging.

These internal and external changes resulted in a number of shifts in [the rankings](#). Washington, D.C. shot from #18 to #1, unseating Austin, Texas, which is #2 this year.

In the medium sized markets (population 250,000 to 500,000) Boulder, Colorado, held on to #1, with challenger Lexington, Kentucky, home of the Kentucky Derby, moving up from #8 to #2. Athens, Georgia, takes the prize as best small city for relocating families, with Cheyenne, Wyoming, a ranking a close second and Fargo, North Dakota, moving up from the pack to #3. Last year's winner, Yolo County, California (Davis), is ranked 4th this year.

The geographic unit measured in this study is the 'metropolitan statistical area' or MSA. This is defined by the federal government as a 'core area containing a substantial population nucleus, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of social and economic integration with that core.'

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À l'attention des rédacteurs de chroniques d'affaires

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Worldwide ERC et Primacy Relocation publient la liste 2005 des villes américaines les plus désirables au plan familial pour les réinstallations de personnel

SAN DIEGO -- Le 20 mai 2005 -- Les sociétés Worldwide ERC^{MD} (ERC pour Employee Relocation Council), et Primacy Relocation ont publié cette semaine la liste Best Cities for Relocating FamiliesTM pour 2005. Cette liste annuelle désigne, parmi les zones métropolitaines de grandes, moyennes et petites dimensions aux États-Unis, les villes les plus désirables au plan familial pour les réinstallations de personnel. Occupant cette année le premier rang dans chacune des trois catégories: Washington (DC), Boulder (Colorado) et Athens (Georgia). Cette désignation, établie en collaboration avec Bert Sperling, de la société Sperling's BestPlaces, se fonde sur une évaluation des facteurs à court et à long terme les plus susceptibles d'assurer le succès d'une réinstallation.

Les résultats se démarquent de l'évaluation de l'année dernière, l'équipe de recherche Sperling/Primacy ayant élargi sa définition de la famille américaine pour y inclure les données concernant les soins aux aînés et les mesures d'aide à la vie autonome. Ces données ont été fournies par l'agence fédérale Administration on Aging, chargée de services aux personnes âgées. Les recherches montrent que, d'année en année, les employés visés par une mutation se préoccupent davantage de disposer de services adéquats et sûrs pour leurs parents âgés.

Le vice-président exécutif de Worldwide ERC, H. Cris Collie, CAE, déclare à ce propos: « Les réinstallations de personnel relèvent d'impératifs d'affaires, mais leur réussite est de plus en plus liée à la satisfaction d'un ensemble de besoins familiaux. »

L'étude dresse la liste des 50 villes américaines de premiers rangs dans les trois groupements de population respectifs. Tout en se fondant sur les normes d'évaluation usuelles, coût de la vie, fiscalité, coût et appréciation des maisons, écoles et climat, elle considère aussi

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ERC et Primacy, villes américaines les plus désirables au plan familial pour les réinstallations de personnel
des critères souvent négligés de l'adaptation des familles à leurs nouveaux secteurs de résidence.

« Même les meilleurs programmes de réinstallation se heurtent aux obstacles bureaucratiques et aux frais imprévus », souligne Matt Spinolo, PDG de Primacy. « C'est pourquoi nous avons fait entrer en compte des facteurs tels que la durée des déplacements quotidiens pour le travail et les règles suivies par les universités locales pour les frais de scolarité applicables aux candidats de l'extérieur. De plus, nous analysons maintenant la diligence de chacun des États américains à l'égard des installations de soins de longue durée. »

ERC and Primacy ont annoncé leurs résultats à l'occasion de la Conférence nationale sur les réinstallations de personnel, tenue à San Diego. Le rapport complet, disponible sur le Web à l'adresse www.primacy.com, sera aussi publié cet été dans le magazine Mobility.

Worldwide ERC^{MD} est l'association par excellence pour les intervenants des services de réinstallation de la main-d'œuvre. Y adhèrent plus de 10 000 gestionnaires privés et gouvernementaux, des sociétés immobilières, des évaluateurs de biens immobiliers ainsi qu'un large éventail d'entreprises et de particuliers. Pour consultation Web: www.erc.org.

Primacy Relocation fournit une gamme complète de services de réinstallation aux États-Unis et à travers le monde: services immobiliers, services au lieu de destination, transport des biens, programmes d'entreprise et soutien dans les cas d'expatriation. Elle a son siège social à Memphis et possède des bureaux à Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Omaha, Sacramento et Washington (DC). À l'étranger, elle a des bureaux à Bâle, Genève, Lausanne, Neuchâtel, Zurich, Munich, Londres, Montréal et Shanghai. Pour consultation Web (en huit langues): www.primacy.com.

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BEST U.S. CITIES FOR RELOCATING FAMILIES – 2005



Last year's inaugural Best Cities for Relocating Families study has been hailed by businesses, families, and the national media as a unique and valuable resource. In its second year, Worldwide ERC® and Primacy have refined the study's data, dug even deeper for pertinent, timely research, and optimized the criteria that matter most to families.

Modeled after the popular "Best Places to Live" studies produced for *Money* magazine, Worldwide ERC® and Primacy have teamed with Sperling's BestPlaces to rate cities based on those factors – short-term and long-term – that determine the likelihood of a successful relocation.



WORLDWIDE ERC® AND PRIMACY RELOCATION BUILDING AN EVEN BETTER “BEST CITIES”

-continued from the front

“Best Cities for Relocating Families” gauges the ease of moving to a city – rather than living in a city. The results, separated by market size, give a solid ranking of cities based on how easily newcomers can settle into them.

For 2005, the ranking process again combined traditional factors such as tax rates, average home cost, and home appreciation with more subtle variables that can affect quality of life and cost of living after a move – including the ability to qualify for in-state tuition, service levels of local utilities, volunteerism, and auto taxes.

New criteria for 2005 included nuanced climate criteria to give value to those cities where mild winters, mild summers, and plentiful rainfall combine to keep utility prices reasonable. We have also broadened our definition of “families” to include elder-care and assisted-living statistics from the Federal Administration on Aging. This is a direct response to the importance employees place on finding safe and meaningful care for their aging parents.

The final rankings represent the most sophisticated comparative research ever undertaken to determine how geography affects relocation success.

LARGE MARKETS

(METRO AREAS WITH POPULATIONS OVER 500,000)

RANKINGS: 1-50

- 1 Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV
- 2 Austin/San Marcos, TX
- 3 Colorado Springs, CO
- 4 Middlesex/Somerset/Hunterdon, NJ
- 5 Louisville, KY-IN
- 6 San Jose, CA
- 7 New Orleans, LA
- 8 Denver, CO
- 9 Orange County, CA
- 10 Knoxville, TN
- 11 Albuquerque, NM
- 12 Monmouth/Ocean, NJ
- 13 Oklahoma City, OK
- 14 Nashville, TN
- 15 Ventura, CA
- 16 Baltimore, MD
- 17 San Francisco, CA
- 18 Fort Worth/Arlington, TX
- 19 Providence/Fall River/Warwick, RI-MA
- 20 Baton Rouge, LA
- 21 San Antonio, TX
- 22 Las Vegas, NV-AZ
- 23 Memphis, TN-AR-MS
- 24 Atlanta, GA
- 25 Tulsa, OK
- 26 Bergen/Passaic, NJ
- 27 Wilmington/Newark, DE-MD
- 28 Dallas, TX
- 29 Harrisburg/Lebanon/Carlisle, PA
- 30 Allentown/Bethlehem/Easton, PA
- 31 Seattle/Bellevue/Everett, WA
- 32 El Paso, TX
- 33 Jersey City, NJ
- 34 Oakland, CA
- 35 Los Angeles/Long Beach, CA
- 36 McAllen/Edinburg/Mission, TX
- 37 Nassau/Suffolk, NY
- 38 Raleigh-Durham/Chapel Hill, NC
- 39 Houston, TX
- 40 Phoenix/Mesa, AZ
- 41 Sacramento, CA
- 42 Salt Lake City/Ogden, UT
- 43 Sarasota/Bradenton, FL
- 44 Newark, NJ
- 45 Scranton/Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton, PA
- 46 San Diego, CA
- 47 Philadelphia, PA-NJ
- 48 Richmond/Petersburg, VA
- 49 Orlando, FL
- 50 Jacksonville, FL

MEDIUM MARKETS

(METRO AREAS WITH POPULATIONS BETWEEN 250,000 – 500,000)

RANKINGS: 1-50

- 1 Boulder/Longmont, CO
- 2 Lexington, KY
- 3 Fort Collins/Loveland, CO
- 4 Burlington, VT
- 5 Greeley, CO
- 6 Provo/Orem, UT
- 7 Boise City, ID
- 8 Clarksville/Hopkinsville, TN-KY
- 9 Manchester, NH
- 10 Portsmouth/Rochester, NH-ME
- 11 Biloxi/Gulfport/Pascagoula, MS
- 12 Trenton, NJ
- 13 Lafayette, LA
- 14 Evansville/Henderson, IN-KY
- 15 Bremerton, WA
- 16 Augusta/Aiken, GA-SC
- 17 Anchorage, AK
- 18 Brazoria, TX
- 19 Shreveport/Bossier City, LA
- 20 Columbus, GA-AL
- 21 Jackson, MS
- 22 Fayetteville/Springdale/Rogers, AR
- 23 Reno, NV
- 24 Portland, ME
- 25 Olympia, WA
- 26 Lowell, MA-NH
- 27 Worcester, MA-CT
- 28 Macon, GA
- 29 Lawrence, MA-NH
- 30 Savannah, GA
- 31 Brockton, MA
- 32 Erie, PA
- 33 Charleston, WV
- 34 Montgomery, AL
- 35 Johnson City/Kingsport/Bristol, TN-VA
- 36 Galveston/Texas City, TX
- 37 Barnstable/Yarmouth, MA
- 38 Chattanooga, TN-GA
- 39 Santa Barbara/Santa Maria, CA
- 40 Asheville, NC
- 41 Fort Smith, AR-OK
- 42 Hamilton/Middletown, OH
- 43 Johnstown, PA
- 44 Huntsville, AL
- 45 Santa Cruz/Watsonville, CA
- 46 Huntington/Ashland, WV-KY
- 47 Killeen/Temple, TX
- 48 Madison, WI
- 49 Waco, TX
- 50 New London/Norwich, CT-RI

SMALL MARKETS

(METRO AREAS WITH POPULATIONS FROM 50,000 – 250,000)

RANKINGS: 1-50

- 1 Athens, GA
- 2 Cheyenne, WY
- 3 Fargo/Moorhead, ND-MN
- 4 Yolo, CA
- 5 Enid, OK
- 6 Grand Forks, ND-MN
- 7 Hagerstown, MD
- 8 Pocatello, ID
- 9 Dover, DE
- 10 Casper, WY
- 11 Bellingham, WA
- 12 Cumberland, MD-WV
- 13 Nashua, NH
- 14 Owensboro, KY
- 15 Iowa City, IA
- 16 Great Falls, MT
- 17 Grand Junction, CO
- 18 State College, PA
- 19 Bryan/College Station, TX
- 20 Fitchburg/Leominster, MA-NH
- 21 Bangor, ME
- 22 New Bedford, MA
- 23 Missoula, MT
- 24 Billings, MT
- 25 Flagstaff, AZ-UT
- 26 Texarkana, TX-AR
- 27 Lawrence, KS
- 28 Bismarck, ND
- 29 La Crosse, WI-MN
- 30 Pueblo, CO
- 31 Parkersburg/Marietta, WV-OH
- 32 Lawton, OK
- 33 Hattiesburg, MS
- 34 Lewiston/Auburn, ME
- 35 Pittsfield, MA
- 36 Lafayette, IN
- 37 Florence, SC
- 38 Charlottesville, VA
- 39 Bloomington, IN
- 40 Alexandria, LA
- 41 Wheeling, WV-OH
- 42 Las Cruces, NM
- 43 Santa Fe, NM
- 44 Monroe, LA
- 45 Jacksonville, NC
- 46 Steubenville/Weirton, OH-WV
- 47 Kenosha, WI
- 48 Albany, GA
- 49 Lake Charles, LA
- 50 Vineland/Milville/Bridgeton, NJ



Background: Worldwide ERC® - Primacy Relocation® Best U.S. Cities for Relocating Families™



The purpose of the 2005 Best Cities for Relocating Families is to determine which cities are the most adaptable for newly resettled families.

- We took into consideration quality-of-life issues that most "best places" surveys weigh, but we paid special attention to criteria that families deal with the first year they live in a new location.
- We also looked carefully at quality of life issues that transferees often discuss with their assigned relocation consultants (Primacy operations managers in all regions were polled). Many of these criteria are important beyond the first year, but they have a profound impact on newcomer families:

Economic Impacts

- Property Crime: per capita, includes burglary, larceny, auto theft, and arson.
- Income Taxes: city, county, and state marginal tax rates for \$50,000 income.
- Property Taxes: effective property tax rates.
- Cost of Living: including food, shelter, transportation, entertainment.
- Home Price: Median cost of a single-family home in the metro area
- Home Appreciation: Increase in home price over the last year. This important for "short timers" or families planning to finance home improvement.
- Climate's effect on utility/water bills

Education

- Pupil-Teacher Ratios
- Requirements for in-state tuition at local universities. A good indication of how local institutions treat newcomers.

"Hassle Factors"

- Average commute time
- Neighborhood mix of homes, jobs, and services (How many of your routine errands require a 20+ minute drive?)
- Accessibility of the street network (easy to get around, no mile-long blocks)
- Utility customer service ratings (what was it like getting service hooked up?)
- Vehicle property taxes (were you expecting that \$975 charge for new tags?)

Elder Care (NEW for 2005)

- States' support for the federal Administration on Aging Ombudsman Program overseeing assisted living facilities

Social Fabric (for making new friends and entertainment)

- Strength of activity centers and downtowns
- Rate of volunteerism (the quickest way to build a new network of friends is through active community service)

Talking Points

- Unlike many quality of life surveys, ours did not take into account things like access to professional sports, water or air quality, state budget deficits, performing arts, health care, high school graduation rates, or the number of available flights at local airports.
- These will be taken into account in future Best U.S. Cities for Relocating Families surveys only if the employee relocation professionals who are polled indicate that their transferees are showing increased concern about these issues.
- The fact that a city is growing fast does not mean it's great for family relocation. It means that the city may be a good place for a business to relocate. The old "people vote with their feet" argument does not take into account the fact that people have to go where the jobs are.
- Some issues important to successful family relocations are not accurately tracked on a national basis. When good data is readily available, we will incorporate data on the quality of child care in each city and the diversity of professional-class job opportunities (for trailing spouses).
- In all fairness, metro areas with Primacy Relocation offices did not exactly top the charts, with the obvious exception of Washington, D.C. Our other locations were ranked 23rd, 28th, 35th, and 41st, while 3 others did not make the list at all.

About Bert Sperling

Nearly 20 years ago, Bert Sperling created the study for Money magazine's "Best Places to Live" flagship article. His methodology and analysis has continued to be the basis for this well-known study, as well as most of the "Best Places" studies which appear in the media today.

Annually, his "Healthiest Cities for Women" study is featured in SELF magazine. Other recent projects include "Best Places to Retire" (Money), "Best Cities for Women" (Ladies' Home Journal), "Great College Towns" (Newsweek), "This Town Rocks! - Best Cities for Teens" (Seventeen), "Best Places to Buy a Second Home" (Smart Money), "Best Places to Raise an Outdoor Family" (Outdoor Explorer), "Hot Dating in Small Towns" (MTV), "America's Best City to Live" (USAWeekend) and features in Men's Health, Men's Journal, Men's Fitness and Kiplinger's.



Sperling's firm has also performed a number of "Best Places" studies for corporate advertising campaigns including the recent "Most Photogenic Cities" (FujiFilm), "Most Romantic Cities" (Korbel Champagne), "Best and Worst Cities for Skin Care" (Keri Lotion), "Safest Cities" (Chevrolet), "Worst Places for Fleas" (Hartz Mountain), "Most Hazardous Places" (Duracell), "Pet Healthiest Cities" (Purina), "Asthma HotSpots" (Glaxo Smith Kline), "America's Sweetest Cities" (Hersheys), "Most UnWired Cities" (Intel), "Most Drivable Cities" (Pep Boys) and others.

Four years ago, Sperling made his information available on the web site, www.bestplaces.net. A recent article in the Washington Post recently declared, "No other site was nearly as comprehensive or compelling as this one." The web site has been the focus of articles in the New York Times and Wall Street Journal, as well as local newspapers throughout the country.

Corporate partners licensing city and neighborhood data from his firm have included Microsoft's MSN HomeAdvisor, eBay, Yahoo!, AOL, the Wall Street Journal, CNN-Money.com, USNews.com, ConsumerInfo, and the web sites of the nation's largest real estate and relocation companies.

Sperling authored the 2004 book "Cities Ranked & Rated: Your Guide to the Best Places to Live in the U.S. & Canada."

Bert Sperling currently makes his home in Portland, Oregon, after living in Kodiak, Alaska; Carmel Valley, California; Key West, Florida; and Long Island, New York.