MediaRoom

Seventh Annual Farmers Insurance Study Ranks the Most Secure Places to Live in the U.S.

Madison, Wisconsin Tops All Large Metropolitan Areas

LOS ANGELES, Dec. 16, 2010 /PRNewswire/ -- Safety and security are among the most basic human needs, and a safe, secure environment in which to live, work and raise a family is of utmost importance to many Americans.

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According to the seventh annual Most Secure U.S. Places to Live rankings from Farmers Insurance Group of Companies®, Madison, Wis., is the most secure U.S. community among large metropolitan areas (population of 500,000 or greater).

Olympia, Wash., is the most secure mid-size U.S. city (population between 150,000 and 500,000), while the Lewiston, Idaho–Clarkston, Wash., area ranks as the most secure small town (population less than 150,000) for the second consecutive year.

The rankings, compiled by database experts at www.bestplaces.net, took into consideration crime statistics, extreme weather, risk of natural disasters, housing depreciation, foreclosures, air quality, terrorist threats, environmental hazards, life expectancy and job loss numbers in 379 U.S. municipalities. The study divided the communities into three groups: large metropolitan areas, mid-size cities and small towns.

"Farmers congratulates all of the communities recognized in the 2010 annual *Farmers Most Secure Places to Live* survey. In today's challenging economy, citizens look to their local governments to keep their communities secure and economically strong," noted Robert Woudstra, Farmers CEO.

"In the 82 years since its founding, Farmers has been committed to improving the communities where its customers, agents and employees live and work," Mr. Woudstra added. "Farmers is committed to improving safety, expanding educational opportunities, enhancing health and human services, encouraging civic participation and supporting charitable organizations in every community."

The Madison, Wis., area moved up two spots from a year ago to rank No. 1 among large metropolitan areas in the 2010 Farmers study. The state capital of Wisconsin and home to the University of Wisconsin-Madison, it is among the top cities in the U.S. in the number of Ph.D.s and college graduates per capita. Madison's top score in the 2010 Farmers study is largely due to its low unemployment rate, low violent crime rate and long life expectancy of its residents.

The Olympia, Wash., area reclaimed its spot as the top mid-size city it held in both 2007 and 2008. The state capital of Washington, Olympia is considered a major cultural center of the Puget Sound region and is a hub for artists and musicians, with a vibrant downtown and access to outdoor activities. Its increased job growth, high air quality and low risk of severe weather greatly contributed to its top ranking in the Farmers study.

The Lewiston–Clarkston area repeated as the most secure small town from the 2009 Farmers study. The area's access to the Pacific Ocean through a network of river, rail and highway transportation facilities provides an excellent business climate for what is regarded as the most inland seaport in the Western U.S. It scored high in the study due to excellent job growth, low crime rates and minimal housing depreciation.

Here are the Farmers Insurance Group's Most Secure U.S. Places to Live for 2010:

Large Metro Areas (500,000 or more residents)

- Madison, Wis.
- Des Moines–West Des Moines, Iowa
- Syracuse, N.Y.
- Austin–Round Rock, Texas
- Portland–South Portland–Biddeford, Maine
- Rochester, N.Y.
- Honolulu, Hawaii
- El Paso, Texas
- Bethesda–Gaithersburg–Frederick, Md.
- Seattle–Bellevue–Everett, Wash.
- Pittsburgh, Pa.
- Minneapolis–St. Paul–Bloomington, Minn.
- Nassau–Suffolk Counties, N.Y.
- McAllen–Edinburg–Mission, Texas
- Bridgeport–Stamford–Norwalk, Conn.
- Raleigh–Cary, N.C.
- Albany–Schenectady–Troy, N.Y.

- Wichita, Kan.
- Buffalo–Niagara Falls, N.Y.
- New Haven–Milford, Conn.

Mid-Size Cities (150,000–500,000 residents)

- Olympia, Wash.
- Sioux Falls, S.D.
- Bellingham, Wash.
- Kennewick–Richland–Pasco, Wash.
- Fargo, N.D.–Moorhead, Minn.
- Rochester, Minn.
- Duluth, Minn.–Superior, Wis.
- Binghamton, N.Y.
- Lynchburg, Va.
- Burlington, Vt.
- St. Cloud, Minn.
- Green Bay, Wis.
- Yakima, Wash.
- Appleton, Wis.
- Spokane, Wash.
- Bremerton–Silverdale, Wash.
- Boulder, Colo.
- Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- Fayetteville–Springdale–Rogers, Ark.
- Las Cruces, N.M.

Small Towns (Fewer than 150,000 residents)

- Lewiston, Idaho–Clarkston, Wash.
- State College, Pa.
- Ithaca, N.Y.
- Bismarck, N.D.
- Logan, Utah
- Wenatchee, Wash.
- Morgantown, W.Va.
- Billings, Mont.
- Corvallis, Ore.
- Midland, Texas
- Sioux City, Iowa
- La Crosse, Wis.–Winona, Minn.
- Elmira, N.Y.
- Rapid City, S.D.
- Oshkosh–Neenah, Wis.
- Eau Claire, Wis.
- Mount Vernon–Anacortes, Wash.
- Fond du Lac, Wis.
- Blacksburg–Christiansburg–Radford, Va.
- Grand Forks, N.D.–Crookston, Minn.

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