

Medford ranks 34 among U.S. and Canadian cities

By [Meg Landers](#)

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MEDFORD — The city's climate, culture and overall quality of life have earned it a ranking of 34 out of more than 400 metropolitan areas in the United States and Canada, according to "Cities Ranked & Rated, 2nd Edition," released this week.

"I would put it even higher," said Judy Shrader, a Medford resident of 31 years who was perusing the Rogue Valley Growers and Crafters Market Thursday. She said Medford's climate, residents and outdoor activities make it a desirable place to live.

Written by Bert Sperling and Peter Sandler, "Cities Ranked & Rated" is designed as a guide for those looking to relocate. The first edition, published in 2004, put Medford at 72.

Cities are ranked by economy and jobs, cost of living, climate, education, health and health care, crime, transportation, leisure, arts and culture and overall quality of life. The book placed Medford between Columbus, Ind., and St. Louis. Corvallis ranks 14th, Bend 56th, and Eugene-Springfield 68th.

Emilie Sampson, who moved to Medford from the Bay Area a year and a half ago to raise her three sons, said she would give Medford a higher ranking than 34th because of the slower pace and lower incidence of crime.

"It feels so much safer," she said.

Amy Wilhelms, mother of three, moved from Sacramento nine years ago.

"I just really wanted to get out of the big city," she said. "I turn on the news (in Medford) and they're talking about farms and high school teams — they're not talking about the gangs on the south side."

The clean air and beautiful mountain vistas make it an ideal place for her family, she said.

"I love Medford," she said.

Beverley Brahe of Central Point said she likes how she can leave Medford and within 30 minutes be in a scenic area. But she said with development and sprawl, such rural areas are shrinking.

"I'd like to see much better planning," she said.

Bob Biondini said he and his wife, Suzanne, moved to Medford five years ago from the Bay Area.

"The cost of living was great," he said. "Medical was second to none," he said. He said he appreciates living in a close-knit neighborhood where residents look out for each other.

"It's real small-town stuff. It's Norman Rockwell," he said.

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TOP 10 CITIES

The second edition of "Cities Ranked & Rated" puts Medford at 34. Here are the top 10:

1. Gainesville, Fla.
2. Bellingham, Wash.
3. Portland metropolitan area
4. Colorado Springs, Colo.
5. Ann Arbor, Mich.
6. Ogden-Clearfield, Utah
7. Asheville, N.C.
8. Fort Collins-Loveland, Colo.
9. San Luis Obispo-Paso Robles, Calif.
10. Boise-Nampa, Idaho