

**Best Places to Live: Top 100**

For this year's list we focused on smaller places that offered the best combination of economic opportunity, good schools, safe streets, things to do and a real sense of community.

*By Kate Ashford, Andrea Bartz, Jeff Cox, Asa Fitch, Stephen Gandel, Josh Hyatt, Rob Kelley, Kathleen Knight, Joe Light, Ismat Sarah Mangla, Sarah Max, Jennifer Merritt, Brad Nelson, Donna Rosato, Ingrid Tharasook*

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**61. Woodridge, Ill.**

**Population:** 32,300  
**Median home price (2006):** \$281,362  
**Average property taxes (2005):** \$5,275

Two years shy of its semi-centennial, Woodridge is one of the youngest towns on the list. But don't let its age fool you: the quaint village has already made huge steps with the Internationale Centre (one of the largest multi-state use business parks in the Chicago area) and the universal accreditation of all its schools by a local agency (only 5% of schools in the entire state receive this). Woodridge is a three-time winner of a county Municipal Innovation Award, thanks to local festivals such as Celebrate the Many Faces of Woodridge and Woodridge Idol. -*J.T.*



**See complete data and interactive map for Woodridge**  
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Money  BEST PLACES TO LIVE 2007 

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**WINNER**  
**Woodridge, IL**  
 Top 100 rank: 61  
 Population: 32,300

## Financial

	City stats	Best places avg.
<b>Median family income</b> (per year)	\$83,446	\$90,316
<b>Family purchasing power</b> (annual, cost-of-living adjusted)	\$87,195	\$82,867
<b>Sales tax</b>	8.00%	6.74%
<b>State income tax rate</b> (highest bracket)	3.00%	6.38%
<b>State income tax rate</b> (lowest bracket)	3.00%	2.74%
<b>Auto insurance premiums</b> (Average for the state)	\$1,645	\$2,121
<b>Job growth %</b> (2000-2006)	4.18%	13.41%

## Housing

	City stats	Best places average
<b>Median home price</b>	\$281,362	\$359,352
<b>Average property taxes</b> (2005)	\$5,275	\$3,585
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## Education

	City stats	Best places average
<b>Colleges, universities and professional schools</b> (within 30 miles)	52	29
<b>Junior colleges and technical institutes</b> (within 30 miles)	34	18
<b>Test scores reading</b> (% above/below state average)	19.3%	20.1%
<b>Test scores math</b> (% above/below average)	17.0%	24.8%
<b>% students attending public/private schools</b> (located within town limits)	90.6/9.4	91.2 / 12.1

## Quality of life

	City stats	Best places average
<b>Air quality index*</b> (% of days AQI ranked as good)	45.5%	77.3%
<b>Personal crime incidents</b> (per 1,000)	0 <sup>3</sup>	13
<b>Property crime incidents</b> (per 1,000)	6 <sup>3</sup>	206
<b>Median commute time</b> (in minutes)	27.1	23.1

<b>% population with commute 45 mins. or longer</b>	<b>23.1%</b>	<b>15.6%</b>
<b>% population walk or bike to work</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>
<b>Leisure and culture</b>		
	City stats	Best places average
<b>Movie theaters</b> (within 15 miles)	<b>35</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Restaurants</b> (within 15 miles)	<b>4,852</b>	<b>2,899</b>
<b>Bars</b> (within 15 miles)	<b>535</b>	<b>287</b>
<b>Public golf courses</b> (within 30 miles)	<b>265</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>Libraries</b> (within 15 miles)	<b>103</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Museums</b> (accredited by AAM; within 30 miles)	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Ski resorts</b> (within 100 miles)	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Arts funding</b> (Dollars per person of state funds spent on arts)	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Weather</b>		
	City stats	Best places average
<b>Annual rainfall</b> (inches)	<b>35.53</b>	<b>39.64</b>
<b>% clear days in the area</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>High temp in July ° F</b>	<b>86.7°</b>	<b>85.4°</b>
<b>Low temp in Jan ° F</b>	<b>13.6°</b>	<b>20.9°</b>
<b>Health*</b>		
	City stats	Best places average
<b>Has health plan</b> (% of residents)	<b>88.3%</b>	<b>90.5%</b>
<b>Body mass index</b> (avg. for residents)	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Diabetes rates</b> (% of residents diagnosed)	<b>11.0%</b>	<b>9.3%</b>
<b>Hypertension rates</b> (% of residents diagnosed)	<b>30.4%</b>	<b>30.6%</b>
<b>Elder-care facilities**</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>Meet the neighbors</b>		
	City stats	Best places average
<b>Median age</b>	<b>34.0</b>	<b>36.8</b>
<b>Completed at least some college</b> (% of residents)	<b>72.8%</b>	<b>72.4%</b>
<b>Married</b>	<b>55.6%</b>	<b>60.8%</b>
<b>Divorced</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>
<b>Racial diversity index</b> (100 is national average; higher numbers indicate greater diversity)	<b>95.0</b>	<b>59.2</b>
<b>Amount spent on vacations</b> (domestic and foreign, household avg. per year)	<b>\$8,251</b>	<b>\$8,250</b>

\*County data

\*\*Elder-care services refer to skilled nursing and assisted living facilities. Data from Total Living Choices.

(3) Crime incidences are estimates based on FBI 2005 Universal Crime and incidence reports, OnBoard Analysis.

# Honors go to Lisle, Woodridge

July 17, 2007

By KATE R. HOULIHAN Staff Writer

Residents of Lisle and Woodridge have good reason to celebrate being named a "Great American Town."

Both towns, located east and southeast of Naperville, on Monday were named to Money magazine's Top 100 list of Great American Towns in the magazine's 20th annual listing of the country's best places to live. This year's criteria had towns with a population between 7,500 and 50,000 eligible.

Lisle took the 20th spot, and Woodridge came in 61st. Two other Illinois locales that made the 2007 list are Libertyville and South Elgin.

In her third year as a Money magazine staff writer, Donna Rosato visited Lisle in the latter stages of the publication's ranking process.

"It was the culmination of good jobs and affordable homes, especially compared to some of the pricier suburbs around it," Rosato said. "It was more affordable, especially for families."

Rosato also cited the Morton Arboretum and Community Park as feathers in the village's cap, in addition to the annual Eyes to the Skies festival.

"If people know Lisle, they probably know it for that," Rosato said.

"One of the reasons we didn't make the top 10 was because of our downtown," Broda said.

While other communities in the top 10 had a more established downtown, Broda said Lisle is undergoing a downtown development plan to rebuild the area.

Woodridge, a mere 48 years old, is one of the "younger" towns on the list, according to the description on CNNMoney.com. The Web site applauds Woodridge for the Internationale Centre business park, universal accreditation of all its schools and nod as a Municipal Innovation Award winner.

"We're very excited," Woodridge mayor William Murphy said, calling "the diversity of the community and our residents" the favorite thing about the village in his opinion.

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# Four area towns make 'best' list

*Daily Herald news services*

Posted Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Four towns in Chicago's suburbs have been named one of the best places to live in the country by Money Magazine.

The magazine, which ranks the best 100 towns to live each year, decided this year to focus on smaller places that offered the "best combination of economic opportunity, good schools, safe streets, things to do and a real sense of community."

Lisle came in at No. 20, Libertyville was ranked No. 52, Woodridge was 61st and South Elgin was No. 82.

Lisle is a town that often gets overshadowed by its bigger neighbors, but on Monday, it was standing out well on its own.

Mayor Joe Broda said he knew in early June they would be on the list, but they didn't know what number.

"No. 20 is fabulous," he said. "That's as good as being No. 1 to me."

Libertyville's ranking reflects the town's emphasis on providing strong public services, such as its library and schools, Mayor Jeffrey Harger said.

"We continue to strive to make this a well-rounded community, and this proves that we're doing a pretty good job," Harger said.

South Elgin's charming old-fashioned feel with several community gatherings got its name on the list.

The four-day Riverfest Express that's become the town's trademark, the Fox River Trolley Museum and the Tuna Kahuna Fishing Derby, in which kids catch and release fish into the Fox River, all were mentioned in the magazine's entry.

"It's rare to find a place where you can fish in the middle of town," the magazine said. "But in South Elgin, it's common to see anglers wading the shallow Fox River."

Woodridge's assistant village administrator credits the village's schools and economic development for making the list.

"We have very diverse housing stock, great schools, great parks, one of the most expensive bike paths ... we're all things to all people and residents decide what that should look like and what should happen," said Peggy Halik, assistant village administrator.

Money magazine worked with a data provider and a consultant to create the rankings,



**Lisle's Eyes to the Skies Balloon Festival, which boasts one of the state's largest fireworks display on the Fourth of July, is one reason why the village was ranked as the nation's 20th Best Place to Live, according to Money Magazine. (Daily Herald file photo)**

according to the [money.cnn.com](http://money.cnn.com) Web site.

The search was limited to towns with populations between 7,500 and 50,000 people. Job markets, housing prices, schools, health-care access and ambience were among the criteria.

Retirement communities, overwhelmingly white communities and towns with high crime rates were eliminated.

Money Magazine also ranked the top towns for income, job growth and weight. Long Grove was 24th on the list with a median income of \$153,922 while Winnetka was ranked No. 3 at \$195,879.

Kendall County offers the fastest job growth in our area, 47.4 percent between 2000 and 2006.

No counties in our area made the list for the "skinniest." The top ranked county was Marin in California with an average 24.14 body mass index. Experts consider 25 to be normal.

• Daily Herald staff writers Lenore T. Adkins, Amy Boerema, Melissa Jenco and Russell Lissau contributed to this report.

Top 5 towns

Population

Middleton, WI 17,400

Hanover, NH 8,500

Louisville, CO 19,500

Lake Mary, FL 13,200

Claremont, CA 35,900

For a complete list, see

<http://money.cnn.com/magazines/moneymag/bplive/2007/top100/index.html>

# Woodridge says schools put it at 61st

By Melissa Jenco  
*mjenco@dailyherald.com*

Posted Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Woodridge's schools and economic development have landed it among the nation's best small communities, according to Money Magazine.

The village ranked 61st on the magazine's list of the 100 best small places to live.

"Our community has worked very hard to get to where we are and we're thrilled to be honored," said Peggy Halik, assistant village administrator.

Money magazine worked with a data provider and a consultant to create the rankings, according to the [money.cnn.com](http://money.cnn.com) Web site.

The search was limited to towns with populations between 7,500 and 50,000 people. Job markets, housing prices, schools, health-care access and ambience were among the criteria.

Retirement communities, overwhelmingly white communities and towns with high crime rates were eliminated.

The 48-year-old village, which has slightly more than 32,000 residents, is one of the youngest on the magazine's list.

"Don't let its age fool you: the quaint village has already made huge steps with the Internationale Centre (one of the largest multi-state use business parks in the Chicago area) and the universal accreditation of all its schools by a local agency (only 5 percent of schools in the entire state receive this)," according to the magazine.

Halik said the village is a place that tries to meet everybody's needs.

"We have very diverse housing stock, great schools, great parks, one of the most expensive bike paths ... we're all things to all people and residents decide what that should look like and what should happen," she said.

Amy Melinder, president and CEO of the Woodridge Area Chamber of Commerce, said the award will help attract more businesses.

"It shows we have a proven track record of economic development and a safe community, a welcoming community," she said. "The designation from Money magazine lends outside credence."