



## Report: It's a great place to call home West Chester in Best Places to Live for 2005

**WEST CHESTER TWP.** - This Butler County community's enviable demographics helped secure its 45th ranking in the nation on CNN/Money and Money magazine's Best Places to Live for 2005 list. Released Monday, the list was topped by Moorestown, N.J., and ranked 100 communities out of more than 1,300 eligible. Key factors were location, median household income, housing and education based on information from a database of nearly 40,000 cities across the nation.

The designation also took into account West Chester's personal crime risk, leisure and culture, and weather. Officials and business leaders in Ohio's third-largest township on Monday hailed the ranking as significant but not unexpected given the tremendous business and population growth over the last two decades. "It affirms our belief that it's a great place to live and work, and I would think this would also attract companies who might consider relocating to this area," Trustee Catherine Stoker said.

In Ohio, 41 communities were considered contenders for the list, but just seven were selected as top 100 finalists, according to CNN/Money's Web site. While several local communities such as Cincinnati, Fairfield, Hamilton, Maineville and Mason were contenders, West Chester was the only Ohio community in the Greater Cincinnati region to crack the top 100.

In Kentucky, there were eight contenders total, such as Florence, Fort Mitchell and Newport, but the only local community to make the list: Burlington at 79th. Since 1980, West Chester's population has more than doubled and stands at 58,076 today. Residents say they flocked here for prime location, excellent schools, low crime, a wide range of recreation and entertainment activities, and a housing and commercial building boom defying a sagging economy.

Realtor Lisa Hope with Re/Max P&O in West Chester, who has sold homes for 10 years, said the township and Mason are top draws for newcomers. "West Chester seems to be just a little more affordable and generally more rolling and has more trees," Hope said. "... It's very accessible to all the major highways." The township also has seen an avalanche of new businesses, restaurants and hotels open.

"West Chester has a lot of amenities you would be looking for in a community that is emerging and developing in the 21st century," said Joe Hinson, president and chief executive officer of West Chester Chamber Alliance.

Despite the high ranking on the best of list, West Chester's air pollution index, 211, landed it - along with seven other Ohio and Kentucky communities - on a less-desirable CNN/Money and Money magazine list, also released Monday: the top 10 most polluted.

West Chester ranked fourth on the list of 1,321 places considered. That ranking is based on air pollution index, which includes incidence of lead, carbon monoxide and other pollutants. The average national air pollution index is 100.

"That's a Southwest Ohio issue, not a specific West Chester issue," Economic Development Director Melissa Koehler said. "You can't isolate a single community's air quality. You are part of a region."

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## WEST CHESTER'S DEMOGRAPHICS

Source: CNN/Money

### Financial

Median household income... \$79,407

Sales tax... 6.50%

### Housing

Average home price... \$176,464

Home price gain ...2.91%

### Quality of life

Air pollution index... 211

Personal crime risk (100 is the national average; lower is better)... 7

Property crime risk (100 is the national average; lower is better)... 7

### Leisure and culture

Movie theaters (within 15 miles)... 14

Restaurants (within 15 miles)... 2,039

Bars (within 15 miles)... 211

Golf courses (public courses within 30 miles) ...93

Libraries (within 15 miles)... 40

Museums (within 30 miles)... 4

### Weather

Annual precip. (inches)... 43.36

High temp in July... 88.10

Low temp in Jan.... 19.90

### Most polluted

Air pollution index (100 is national average)

1. Valrico, Fla.... 248
2. Lakeland, Fla.... 242
3. Burlington...211
4. West Chester... 211
5. Florence... 209
6. Mason ...209
7. Springboro ...209
8. Loveland ...207
9. Maineville ...207
10. Springfield ...204

## HOW THE LIST WAS COMPILED

Money magazine and CNN/Money teamed with data researchers at OnBoard to research the Best Places to Live for 2005.

OnBoard maintains a database of nearly 40,000 cities. To narrow the search, it began by considering only those cities with population more than 14,000, above-median household income, population growth and real estate appreciation over the past five years.

Those restrictions led to a list of 1,321 places. From there, places were eliminated that weren't within 60 miles of a major airport and 30 miles of a major teaching hospital.

Towns with low rankings for education scores, unemployment, income growth, crime or arts resources also were eliminated. That left 100 towns, which were ranked by weighing economic, education and safety factors twice as much as arts, leisure and park space. Any metropolitan area was limited to one or two places. "Money" writers also interviewed residents and community leaders.

Source: CNN/Money

To see the complete list of the 100 Best Places to Live for 2005, go to <http://money.cnn.com/best/bplive/>

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