

THE KINGMAN
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Kingman rates with the best

Web site says city is great place to relocate

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KINGMAN - A little desert town in northern Arizona, population 27,000, has for the first time earned a seat in the top 100 best places to relocate, according to a real estate services Web site.

The city of Kingman battled with more than 2,000 nominated cities, 100,000 total nominations and 6,000 site profiles for this year's ranking.

The Hualapai Mountains are a factor in the decision to list Kingman as one of the top 100 places to live.

Nicholas Wilbur/ MINER

Not only is Kingman one of the fastest growing communities in Arizona, but based on the preferences of the seven-member Relocate-America.com editorial team, its citizens are truly in love with the town.

Relocate-America reviews nominations from people familiar with a community, and it judges the entry based on about 40 different factors, including data on crime, school performance, recreational activities, economic and environmental health, housing affordability, general beauty of the area and more.

President and CEO Steve Nickerson said in a phone interview that the contest isn't judged by popularity, that is, votes, but by seven judges over a six- to eight-week period of reviewing each city's offerings.

"What we do, we're looking for passion," Nickerson said.

"We're looking for residents who are passionate about living there," he said. Some of the comments fielded from residents included the general quality of life in Kingman, affordable housing, great scenery, high growth, places for camping and hiking, and great people, Nickerson said.

"Housing went up last year, but this is not an expensive place to live," he said. "You can still find an affordable place to live."

Century 21 Realtor and President of the Kingman/ Golden Valley Association of Realtors Rita Zumwalt said Friday that her clients relocate here for many of the same reasons.

Having just shown a California couple around town, Zumwalt said that the price of homes was a big factor. The couple had first looked at Bullhead City, but found that Kingman was more affordable.

She also noted the proximity to Phoenix and Las Vegas and the two lakes nearby that attract residents for fishing, boating and skiing.

Kingman's location between Las Vegas and Phoenix and proximity to the Grand Canyon has made the city a tourism hub for northern Arizona, and the rich history of Route 66 draws thousands of in- and out-of-state travelers every spring.

The small-town feel is also a perk, she said. "People know you by name here," she said.

"I have lived here a long time," since 1973, "and Kingman has changed a lot. But as far as the people, it hasn't. The personality hasn't changed," she said.

Weather is also an appealing quality of Kingman. For the California couple, the hot but not too hot weather was a main attraction.

"Kingman is the type of place where, although there are a couple of hot months, it's still not as hot as Las Vegas and down at the river, like Lake Havasu City," she said.

And of course, always noted by her clients are the Cerbat and Hualapai mountain ranges.

Kingman was one of four Arizona cities to place in the top 100. Lake Havasu City, Sierra Vista and Surprise also placed.

Florida had the highest number of cities on the list at eight, while California and North Carolina each had six.

Relocate-America offers relocation information via a directory of more than 6,000 community profiles across the country.

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