

**Forbes magazine
Top Cities for Jobs****Large Cities**

- 1. Austin-Round Rock, TX**
- 2. Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX**
- 3. San Antonio, TX**
- 4. Fort Worth-Arlington, TX**
- 5. Dallas-Plano-Irving, TX**
6. Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, WA
7. Salt Lake City, UT
8. Raleigh-Cary, NC
9. Oklahoma City, OK
10. Portland-Beaverton, OR/Vancouver, WA

Middle-Sized Cities

- 1. McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX**
2. Tulsa, OK
3. Lafayette, LA
4. Durham-Chapel Hill, NC
5. Kansas City, MO
- 6. Corpus Christi, TX**
7. Baton Rouge, LA
8. Shreveport, LA
9. Anchorage, Alaska
10. Mobile, AL

Small-Sized Cities

- 1. Odessa, TX**
2. Grand Junction, CO
- 3. Longview, TX**
4. Houma-Thibodaux, LA
- 5. Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood, TX**
- 6. Laredo, TX**
7. Athens-Clarke County, GA
8. Kennewick-Pasco-Richland, WA
9. Morgantown, WV
- 10. Bryan-College Station, TX**

Texas cities dominate Forbes 'Top Cities for Jobs' list

By James A. Johnson

When *Forbes* released its "Top Cities for Jobs" based on 2008 job growth statistics, it was no surprise to anyone when Texas dominated the lists for small, medium, and large cities across the country. Although recent job growth figures show the national economic challenges have reached Texas as well, the unprecedented job growth in 2008 has kept the state's unemployment figures well below the national numbers. Experts say that strong foundation still makes Texas the bright spot in the nation during difficult economic times.

The Lone Star State swept the large-city category, which included Austin-Round Rock, Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, San Antonio, Fort Worth-Arlington, and Dallas-Plano-Irving, respectively. The top-rated mid-sized city was McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, and Odessa was first among small U.S. cities, with Longview ranked third and Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood fifth. Odessa also was first



Austin-area biotechnology and life sciences companies employ nearly 7,000 workers. Ryan McVay/Photodisc/Getty Images

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among all 333 Texas Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) that were judged.

Forbes' list reflects the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' job growth in each size category. Rankings are based on a 10-year analysis of total nonfarm employment in industries including manufacturing, retail and wholesale trade, transportation and utilities, leisure, hospitality, government, and financial, business, educational, and health services.

A nationally unparalleled 95 percent of Texas MSAs reported job growth between August 2007 and 2008.

Supporting the state's mission to attract new business and sustain economic prosperity, the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and its 28 local workforce development boards bolster job and industry growth by collaborating with economic development entities, attracting employers with key local labor market information, expediting their hiring efforts using TWC's WorkInTexas.com online job-matching system, and partnering with colleges to facilitate skilled worker training.

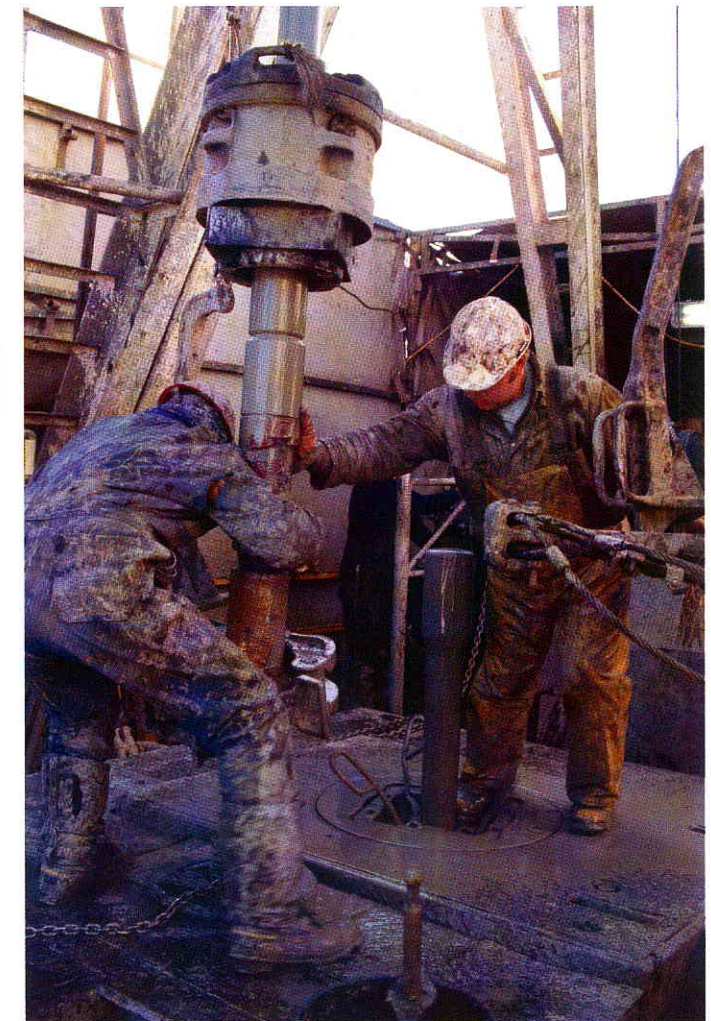
Austin-area biotechnology and life sciences companies, for example, employ nearly 7,000 workers. To train more skilled workers in that high-growth field, Workforce Solutions Capital Area used a \$401,620 Meeting Industries' Critical Workforce Needs grant by teaming up with the Austin Chamber of Commerce's BioAustin Council, Austin Community College, and the University of Texas' Ray Marshall Center. Sixteen of the 50 students who completed consortium-developed curriculum in biotechnology and molecular diagnostics found or retained jobs in related occupations.

In the Houston MSA, oil and gas companies account for one-fifth of the workforce and \$15 billion in local payroll.

Nancy Tootle, energy industry liaison for Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast, said local energy/petrochemical industry growth requires diverse worker skills to compete globally.

"In the next five years with retirement of baby boomers, we need to train 10,000 people in the petrochemical and refining industry," Tootle said.

Using a \$2.3 million TWC Skills Development Fund grant, a Houston-area manufacturing consortium collaborated with Alvin Community College to create or upgrade 1,255 positions for chemical engineers and technicians.



In the Houston MSA, oil and gas companies account for one-fifth of the workforce and \$15 billion in local payroll. Stockbyte/Getty Images

In 2008, Workforce Solutions Permian Basin accommodated industry demand for an additional 1,000 Odessa-area workers by providing applicant screening and referring more than 3,000 job seekers to five major oil and gas employers through WorkInTexas.com.

Collaborating with more than 20 economic development entities and 12 county governments, Workforce Solutions Alamo helped attract Minneapolis-based Medtronic Inc., a leader in medical technology, to San Antonio in 2009.

The company's planned 1,400 employees will generate an estimated \$45 million in annual payroll and \$753 million in economic impact, said Charlie Moke, Alamo's business services director.

"The information workforce representatives provided on labor costs and the experienced labor pool was instrumental in our decision to expand into San Antonio," said Jeff Ruiz, general manager of Medtronic San Antonio. ■