

Brookings named as one of 11 nat'l success stories

■ Only non-metropolitan community selected for benchmark study

BROOKINGS – Over the past several years, Brookings has been showered with accolades: “No. 5 among the 10 best small cities in America,” “No. 3 on the list of the great small-town college towns,” or “one of the best places to live in South Dakota.”

The city has been singled out once again, named among America’s top communities, but this time the recognition came from another state – Indiana – and this time Brookings was recognized for its economic growth, said Al Heuton, executive director of the Brookings Economic Development Corporation (BEDC).

“The state of Indiana recently conducted an in-depth study evaluating cities across the United States that have transformed their economies and experienced substantial growth in talent and communi-

ty investment,” Heuton said. “Brookings was chosen as a case study community after surpassing the national averages in several categories of economic growth.”

The resulting document was called “Benchmarking U.S. Regional Cities: A Study and Guide for Transformation.” The study was commissioned by the Indiana Economic Development Corporation and conducted by Fourth Economy Consulting of Pittsburgh, a nationally recognized economic development planning and strategy firm.

The selection process identified 11 cities to serve as benchmarks for the report, based on positive trends from 1990 to 2013 in 74 economic and quality-of-place indicators such as:



Al Heuton

See **BENCHMARK**, page A2

BENCHMARK: Proactive school

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- Overall population growth
- Population turnaround
- Gross domestic product growth
- Employment growth
- Change in diversity population
- Change in foreign population
- Change in vacancy rate
- Per capita income growth

Other communities chosen for the study included Austin, Texas; Denver, Colo.; Nashville, Tenn.; Raleigh, N.C.; Manhattan, Kansas; Durham, N.C.; Fayetteville, Mo.; Boise, Idaho; Waterloo, Iowa; and Provo, Utah. Brookings was the only non-metropolitan community selected for the benchmark study.

Key takeaways from the Brookings region indicated in the report included the

strong leadership and investment from the private sector through initiatives such as Vision Brookings; a proactive and engaged university system focused on working with local industry and spinning out new technologies and companies; and the importance of ongoing planning efforts as seen in community surveys and visioning charters.

“We are excited to see Brookings recognized for the economic growth and success our region has experienced,” said Heuton,

“The significant community investments made by both public and private sectors are helping us achieve our goal of creating a high-quality place to live and work. These efforts have put Brookings on the

map nationally, which will assist with ongoing workforce recruitment initiatives.”

According to the study, South Dakota State University is a valuable community and economic asset that will continue to help develop the sense of place and economy in Brookings. Key university contributions include providing workers for careers, technology transfer and business incubation, and cultural and entertainment amenities such as Division I sports, music and theater.

For a copy of the study, email Brookings

Economic Development Corporation at bedc@brookingsedc.com.

– From the Brookings Economic Development Corporation