

Lists are us! City rates high again

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It's hard to be humble when you're totally awesome.

So go ahead and brag a little: Colorado Springs is once again on a list of "best places" - this time from Kiplinger's Personal Finance magazine's June issue, which judged our city as one of the 10 best places to live, work and play.

Colorado Springs Mayor Lionel Rivera said he never gets tired of the accolades.

"Never, never. I would be disappointed if the city started to fail to make a list," Rivera said.

In recent months, Colorado Springs has been named "Fittest City in America" by Men's Fitness magazine, No. 1 "Best Places to Live" by Money magazine and one of a thousand places to see before you die in the travel book, "1,000 Places to See Before You Die." Men's Health magazine named Colorado Springs the top city for dogs. Forbes included cats.

"If we got (these accolades) every now and then, it would be nice, but we get them very consistently," said Amy Long, director of marketing for Experience Colorado Springs at Pikes Peak, the local convention and visitors bureau.

Aside from generating community pride, making these lists can make a small but real difference in selling the region and attracting visitors and new business, said Dave White, executive vice president for marketing with the Colorado Springs Economic Development Corp.

"We're excited," White said. "Kiplinger's is a very well-respected publication and this type of ranking will bring a lot of positive light to the region."

Who could resist a pitch like this?

"From snow-capped Pikes Peak to the red rocks of the Garden of the Gods, natural beauty abounds, and with an average of 300 days of sunshine annually, citizens of 'the Springs' are always off on their next adventure to bask in it," Kiplinger's reporter Jessica Anderson wrote in the magazine.

When she visited for several days in March, Anderson fed the giraffes at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, studied the paintings at the Fine Arts Center and, naturally, took the Cog Railway up Pikes Peak.

"I had never been exposed to that much grandeur at once," she said. "Those are just the lucky things that residents in the Springs can enjoy whenever they want."

Kiplinger's looked at population growth, income growth, job growth, job quality and the existence of a "creative class" when making the rankings.

"We wanted to focus on places you could move to," Anderson said in a phone interview. "I was pretty impressed with the amount and the diversity of amenities there for a smaller, second-tier city."

Colorado Springs ranked No. 5 on the list, behind Houston and Omaha, Neb., but ahead of hot spots like Sacramento, Calif., and Austin, Texas. In your face, Austin!

"There is some friendly ribbing between mayors, so I get in my pokes," Rivera said.

SPRINGS HIT PARADE

No. 1 - Men's Fitness, "Fittest City in America"

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No. 1 - Money, "Big Cities to Live In"

No. 1 - Government Fleet Magazine, biodiesel fleet

No. 1 - Forbes, "America's Most Pet-Friendly City"

No. 1 - Men's Health, "Best Cities for Dogs"

No. 5 - Kiplinger's Personal Finance, "Best Cities to Live, Work and Play"

Top 10 - U.S. News and World Report, "Green Places to Retire"

No. 28 - CNN Money, "Best Places to Live and Launch"