

Lewiston drops in magazine rankings

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By Eric Barker of the Tribune

Outdoor Life rates the city as the fourth best place in the nation for hunters and anglers, down from No. 1

Lewiston lost a bit of its luster but still ranks as one of the best places in the country for hunters and anglers to live, according to Outdoor Life magazine.

The city at the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater rivers ranked No. 4 on this year's list of the top 200 hook-and-bullet towns. Last year Lewiston was named the best outdoor community in the country and ranked second in 2008.

Pocatello was ranked second this year, just behind Rapid City, S.D. the reigning top spot for hunting and fishing. Page, Ariz., was ranked third and Kanab, Utah, was fifth.

"Bummer, I wanted to be No. 1," said Michelle Peters of the Hells Canyon Visitors Bureau. "That is still awesome being in the top 5 for the last three years."

Each June the magazine produces the list that has become one of its most popular editions, said John Taranto, an Outdoor Life editor.

"It's a great franchise," he said. "We plan to keep doing it for as long as we can. It's just a matter of keeping it fresh year in and year out."

The effort to keep it fresh is likely the reason Lewiston dropped a few places this year. Taranto said the formula used to rank the towns is tweaked each year to produce different results. A few new towns are considered each year when they come to the attention of the magazine.

Taranto and other editors at Outdoor Life rank towns based on things like their proximity to quality hunting and fishing, public lands access and the liberalness of their gun laws. It also considers economic indicators such as unemployment rates, cost-of-living index, median household income, growth and median home prices. Quality-of-life indicators such as available amenities, quality of schools and population densities were also considered.

Rapid City shot to the top this year in part because it is an outlier in the economic crises affecting most towns and cities in the country. Rapid City has grown by nearly 10 percent in the past decade, and the magazine said that meant jobs were available. However, its unemployment rate at 4.8 percent is slightly higher than Lewiston's 4.5 percent.

Other towns in the top 10 include Bend, Ore., Mountain Home, Ark., Saratoga, Wyo., Rawlins, Wyo., and Pierre. S.D.

Orofino landed at 90 but was ranked 14th in a separate list of the best places to live for whitetail deer hunting. Hailey was ranked sixth on a list for the top trout-fishing towns. Pocatello landed at 14 on the trout

list and Salmon was 17. A ranking of towns for the best big-game hunting had Driggs ranked fourth, Idaho Falls 11th and Lewiston 14th.

Peters said the consistently high showing of Lewiston helps market the area to visitors.

"After those annual June issues come out with the outdoor rankings, you can see a lot of people coming to our website."

The magazine is available at newsstands or online at www.outdoorlife.com.

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