



Top Ten Best Places

Every year, Money Magazine publishes their “Best Places To Live” rankings in categories ranging from small towns and young people to work environments and retirement.

Cities are evaluated by a long list of criteria including financial, housing, education, and quality of life, and earn their rankings based on how they compare to each other. And, those rankings are coveted, providing plenty of good PR for cities that make the list.

The 2012 rankings haven't been released yet, so we compiled their list of the 2011 Top Ten Best Small Towns. Even though Decatur didn't make the list, we were curious how our city stacked up to the “Best.”

You'll be surprised at the results. On the table below, we took the average of the Top Ten cities to compare Decatur's data. Decatur comes out on top in almost every category, scoring highest in “living well for less” that is based on the cost of living index, median home prices, free or affordable cultural arts offerings, and frugal shopping options.

Maybe 2012 will be our year...

Criteria	Top Ten Average*	Decatur
Cost of Living Index (National average is 100)	92%	84%
Median Home Price	\$239,391	\$78,000
Average Monthly Rent	\$1009	\$575
Annual Auto Insurance	\$1707	\$1441
Public/Private Education Enrollment	88%/12%	83%/17%
Air Quality	77% good days	84% good days
Median Commute	21 minutes	13.5 minutes

*Money Magazine's 2011 Top Ten Best Small Towns are Louisville CO, Milton MA, Solon OH, Leesburg VA, Papillion NE, Hanover NH, Liberty MO, Middleton WI, Mukilteo WA, and Chanhassen, MN.