AARP says Greenville is second-best place to live

STAFF REPORTS

Greenville ranks No. 2 on the AARP's 2009 list of Best Places to Live, according to the latest edition of AARP, The Magazine.

The magazine cited the city's vibe as being "family-friendly fun from 'penny candy' to goat-cheese pizza" and said that hiking in nearby Jones Gap State Park is the most relaxing way to spend a fund afternoon.

In the 1960s, Greenville was withering as many other downtowns were, but the magazine attributed 30 years of redeveloping — including pedestrian-friendly Main Street and the Liberty Bridge across Reedy Falls — as bringing the city back to life. You can even have fun for less than $10 by grabbing a cup of coffee or an ice cream cone at Spill the Beans at the entrance to Falls Park.

Other attributes cited as benefiting quality of life are wide sidewalks, plenty of places to walk, connections from downtown to neighborhoods and the conversion of an abandoned rail line to a multiuse trail. Also, the city hosts several major international companies, claiming one of the highest international-investment-per-capita levels in the nation.

The city of 59,000 people boasts a median housing price of $151,090, an average commute of 19 minutes and an average of 220 sunny days annually.

Tucson, Az., ranked as No. 1 on the short list.

Communities following Greenville are Montpelier, Vt., Logan, Utah, and Ames, Iowa.