

Greenville among top 10 small cities to start business

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Greenville is among the top 10 small cities in the U.S. for starting a business, according to a NerdWallet analysis of 463 locations across the country.

Greenville was ranked No. 9 in a list topped by Alpharetta, Georgia. The pool of cities for the analysis consisted of places with populations between 50,000 and 100,000 people and at least 500 businesses. Higher scores were given to cities with higher average business revenue, number of paid employees and median income and housing costs. Unemployment rates and the rate of businesses per 100 people also contributed to the score.

Greenville has 9,371 businesses, with an average business revenue of \$1,874,514, according to NerdWallet's data. More than 37 percent of Greenville businesses have paid employees, according to the report.

Factors not calculated in an economic study are also conducive to the growth of business in Greenville, according to Hank Hyatt, vice president of economic competitiveness for the Greenville Chamber of Commerce.

"It's a community that's known for being open to business. It's an easy place

to get connected, and there's a welcome environment from government," Hyatt said. "It's a good place to land and launch a business."

Quality of life also makes a difference for budding entrepreneurs looking to launch a business, Hyatt said, and Greenville is a place "people want to live."

"If you like the place you're doing business, it's easy doing business," Hyatt said.

Greenville's data is similar to that of Alpharetta, the top city, but businesses in Alpharetta have an average revenue of nearly \$7 million. Greenville and Alpharetta are the only Southern cities in the top 10.

One key factor NerdWallet identified in its analysis is the small cities' proximity to large metropolitan areas. Greenville is located between Charlotte and Atlanta on Interstate 85. That allows companies in Greenville and other small cities with big neighbors "to operate within a smaller, close-knit business community, while still having access to (major) cities," according to the report.

While other cities on the list, including Alpharetta and Waukesha, Wisconsin, are in major metropolitan areas, Greenville is the center of its metropolitan area while being close to two larger ones.