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Metro grades: Oklahoma City, Tulsa fare well in rankings

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Oklahoma City and Tulsa are on a list that should be the envy of lots of other places — for reasons that are familiar and comforting as the nation fights its way out of the Great Recession.

BusinessWeek magazine puts Oklahoma City at No. 3 and Tulsa at No. 7 in a survey of its 40 strongest metropolitan areas. Adding credibility to the rankings is that BusinessWeek used data and analysis supplied by the Brookings Institution, a respected think tank in Washington, D.C.

What Oklahoma City and Tulsa have in common with many others on the list is the housing market. As we have noted previously, home prices here never skyrocketed before the recession began, which meant they didn't crater when hard times hit (housing prices actually rose more than 2 percent in Oklahoma City earlier this year). There are many cities in which the subprime mortgage mess has put thousands of homeowners in financial ruin.

Oklahoma City and Tulsa also are buttressed by the oil and gas industries. BusinessWeek specifically mentioned Devon and Chesapeake, two companies that continue to supply steady employment even as natural gas prices are in a slump.

The magazine's rankings are the latest stretch of positive publicity for Oklahoma City and Tulsa in the past year to year-and-a-half. Such developments prove the fundamentals of employment and quality of life in our two largest cities are headed in the right direction. The challenge will be to keep the momentum when the recession ends and competition from other cities picks up.

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