

WHY AUTO STOCKS ARE SMOKING

Money

SEPTEMBER 2013 | CNNMONEY.COM

Best Places to Live 2013

10
HOTTEST BIG-CITY
NEIGHBORHOODS
NEW YORK, CHICAGO,
L.A., AND MORE

THE NEW WAY
TO SAVE FOR
RETIREMENT

5 YEARS AFTER:
LESSONS OF
THE FINANCIAL
CRISIS

AMERICA'S
TOP 50
**SMALL
TOWNS**

No. 1 | SHARON, MASS.

PLUS
TAKE THE
PAIN OUT
OF MOVING

GREAT TOWN,
BAD HOUSE?
TRY THESE
SMART FIXES



THE AHMAD-KARIM
FAMILY IN NO. 1, SHARON

**CITY OF APPLE VALLEY, MN
#17**

Best Places to Live 2013 *America's best small towns*

How we picked the Best Places to Live

Using statistics from data services company Onboard Informatics and other sources, we crunched the numbers in order to zero in on America's best small towns for families. (Last year, we looked at small cities, with populations between 50,000 and 300,000.) Here's how:

1,326 Start with all U.S. towns with populations of 10,000 to 50,000.

846 Screen out places with a median family income of more than 200% or less than 85% of the state average; those with more than 95% of one race; and those with poor education and crime scores.

622 Exclude retirement communities and towns with major job losses. Rank the rest using job growth, housing appreciation and affordability, safety, schools, health care, arts and leisure, diversity, and ease of living.

60 Factor in more data on the economy, jobs, real estate, and health care. Give the most weight to economic and

housing factors. Limit list to three places per state, one per county, and sort to represent all regions evenly.

36 Visit towns and interview residents; assess traffic, parks, and gathering places; and consider intangibles like community spirit.

1 Select the winner based on the data and reporting.

17. Apple Valley, MN

Top 50 Rank: 17 **Population:** 49,863

If you don't mind cold winters, there's plenty to recommend this family-friendly Twin Cities suburb. There's a wide range of affordable homes: The median sale price is around \$200,000.

Cars are still the de facto transport here, but the city recently added a \$112 million rapid-transit bus system that connects the downtown to area attractions like the Mall of America. Apple Valley is also home to the Minnesota Zoo and 53 parks. — *H.L.*



COURTESY: DYKES/CITY OF APPLE VALLEY

Is Apple Valley a great town, or what?

Apple Valley stats

Financial	Town stats		
Median family income (per year)	\$93,210	Median commute time (in minutes)	22.6
Family purchasing power (annual, cost-of-living adjusted)	\$85,947	% population with commute 45 mins. or longer	11.0%
State sales tax	7.13%	% population walk or bike to work	1.8%
State income tax rate (highest bracket)	7.85% ¹	Leisure and culture	
State income tax rate (lowest bracket)	5.35% ¹	Art Funding (Dollars per person of state funds spent on arts)	4.5
Auto insurance premiums (Average price quotes, for the state)	\$1,594	Weather	
Job growth % (2010-2012)	2.03%	Annual rainfall (inches)	29.41
Housing		% clear days in the area	54%
Median home price (2012)	\$179,000	High temp in July °F	83.6°
Average property taxes (2012)	\$2,722	Low temp in Jan °F	3.8°
Education		Meet the neighbors	
Test scores reading (% above/below state average)	7.1%	Median age	37.4
Test scores math (% above/below state average)	7.9%	Completed at least some college (% of residents)	73.5%
% students attending public/private schools (located within town limits)	99.4/0.6%	Married %	56.8%
Quality of Life		Divorced %	6.9%
Air quality index (% of days AQI ranked as good)	96.7%	Racial diversity index (100 is national average; higher numbers indicate greater diversity)	68.5
Personal crime incidents (per 1,000)	1 ³	From the September 2013 issue Source: Onboard Informatics. Details	
Property crime incidents (per 1,000)	22 ³	(3) Crime incidences are estimates based on FBI 2011 Universal Crime and incidence reports. OnBoard analysis.	

(1) Income tax notes:

17 states have statutory provision for automatically adjusting to the rate of inflation the dollar values of the income tax brackets, standard deductions, and/or personal exemptions. Massachusetts, Michigan, and Nebraska index the personal exemption only. Oregon does not index the income brackets for \$125,000 and over. These states use the personal exemption amounts provided in the federal Internal Revenue Code. The income brackets reported for Minnesota are for single individuals. For married couples filing jointly, the same tax rates apply to income brackets ranging from \$35,480 to \$140,961.