

## Business Week tabs DP as Texas' Best Affordable Suburb

Wednesday, March 03 2010 7:30 pm Bobby Vasquez News – InsideDP.com

At last week's state of the city address, Deer Park Mayor Wayne Riddle announced Deer Park remained strong in tough economic times. That statement became stronger after Business Week listed Deer Park as the Best Affordable Suburb in Texas. Deer Park was included as part of Business Week's annual Best Affordable Suburb's in America 2010 list. Each state had one suburb on the list.

Business Week, Bloomberg publication, examined 863 suburbs across the country, including 15 in Texas, said Business Week writer Venessa Wong. She compared metrics like the ratio of cost of living and home value to average income, performance of local schools, quality of life and violent crime rate to that of other Texas suburbs.

"There are lots of suburbs in America that offer families a good quality of life in a safe community with good schools," she said, via a phone interview from New York. "Although the economy has been difficult, small towns like Deer Park have something to offer at a much lower price."

Wong said Business Week focused on towns within 25 miles of the most populated city in the state, with populations of 5,000 to 60,000; median family incomes of \$51,000 to \$120,000; and lower-than-average crime rates.

She said Deer Park received high marks for green (park) space, short commute time and other livability aspects. Deer Park rated No. 1 in affordability among the 15 Texas suburbs. Neighboring La Porte was No. 2, she said.

Wong's findings do not come as much surprise to Deer Park resident Kirsten Skinner. "We have a big town with a small-town feel," she said. Skinner and her family moved to Deer Park in 1980. She said she appreciates the lower cost-of-living for the higher quality of life.

"We have a Starbucks in the town and right down the street is Charburger," she said. "The schools are great and we live in a safe community. Police response is quick. Most of the people here work in the plants across from 225 or down in NASA. Everything is close by."

In Deer Park, it also doesn't cost much to get where you are going, Skinner said. "I love the gas prices here. Houston has lower gas prices, but it's still six-to-10 cents cheaper here than it is on the north side of [Houston] where my mother lives."

She also said she enjoys the close-knit sense of community. "Parents know what their kids are doing through other parents. We talk to each other. We also tend to stay in town. My across-the-street neighbor was part of the first graduating class of Deer Park High School. Their granddaughter graduated with me."

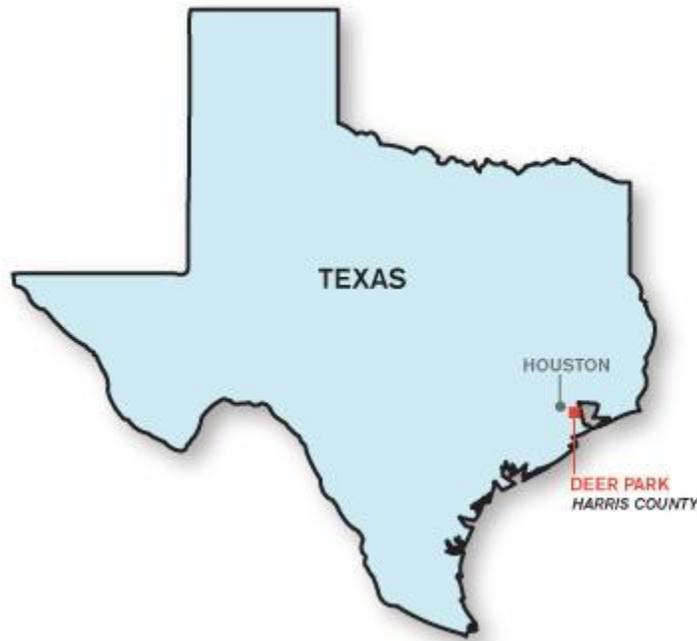
The strong sense of community and affordability lend themselves well to Deer Park's social and economic climate, said Debbie Westbeld, director of economic development for the city.

"Business owners are eager to relocate their operations or open new businesses in an affordable city like Deer Park. Thanks to our city's overall affordability, pro-business attitude, low tax rates, relatively inexpensive real estate and the natural advantages of our close proximity to Houston and the Port ... we have been recognized for what many Deer Park residents already knew; our city is very affordable and a great place to have a business or raise a family," she said. "Deer Park sets high standards for our schools and we have a very low crime rate, which adds to our great quality of living."

# Bloomberg Businessweek

Real Estate March 2, 2010, 6:14PM EST

## Best Affordable Suburbs in America 2010



### Deer Park, Tex.

**Nearest major city:** Houston

**Population:** 31,049

**Median family income:** \$89,348

**Median home price:** \$131,709

**Unemployment rate:** 8.3%

**Violent crime index:** 35

Founded in 1892, Deer Park grew from a town outside of Houston into a small city as companies moved into the area. One of the area's attractions is San Jacinto State Park, which has a battleground, the battleship *USS Texas*, a memorial museum anchored in Buffalo Bayou, and a monument to commemorate the Battle of San Jacinto in 1836. Golfers can take advantage of the 18-hole Battleground Golf Course. The Deer Park Independent School District has 15 schools.