Metropolitan Areas with Best Economic Growth

POLICOM Corporation just published its 2011 economic strength ranking of 366 metropolitan areas around the nation. Researchers analyzed data on three groups of economic indicators:

- Group 1 consists of 10 indicators that influence the standard of living of an area (e.g., per capita personal income)
- Groups 2 includes 9 industries that rely on the flow of money coming into an area (e.g., construction jobs and wages)
- Group 3 is comprised of 4 indicators whose growth reflects a poor economy (e.g., per capita welfare payment)

Researchers applied formulas to measure economic strength of each area. Then, they rank-ordered all areas according to the degree of economic strength.

**United States** - The top 10 strongest economies have been able to sustain economic growth in both quantity and quality for an extended period of time. The top-ranking metropolitan area is Washington, D.C., where the federal government serves as an anchor of economic growth. Salt Lake City is in second place and Seattle is third. Texas is home to the next two thriving metropolitan areas, Austin and Houston. The remaining top 10 metropolitan areas are Des Moines (IA), Nashville (TN), Olympia (WA), Denver (CO), and Sioux Falls (SD).
California - The top-ranking metropolitan area in California is San Diego (14), where presence of the military and high-tech firms fuel economic growth. Sacramento (19) is in second place, where the state government helps with economic expansion. Napa (21), the state’s premier wine country, is in third place. Oxnard (33) and Riverside (40) metropolitan areas round out the list of top 5. The remaining top 10 metropolitan areas are San Luis Obispo (41), Santa Rosa (47), Vallejo (62), San Francisco (67), and Los Angeles (78).1

San Joaquin Valley - Bakersfield (89) leads all metropolitan areas of the San Joaquin Valley in economic strength, including Stockton (123), Fresno (171), Hanford (226), Madera (244), Visalia (265), and Merced (286).

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1 Number in parentheses is the area’s national ranking.
**Bakersfield** - In the Bakersfield metropolitan area, the ranking of economic strength improved gradually from 290 in 2004 to 86 in 2010, but worsened to 89 in 2011.

Source:
POLICOM Corporation, Metropolitan Statistical Areas Economic Strength Ranking 2011,
[http://www.policom.com/metrorank.htm](http://www.policom.com/metrorank.htm)