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**TOP ONE HUNDRED RANKING FOR MASON CITY PLACES IT
AMONG NATION'S ELITE FOR DEVELOPMENT
OPPORTUNITIES**

(Mason City, Iowa – September 1, 2004) Residents of the Mason City area probably do not even consider that they live in an “agurb.” An “agurb” is a new phrase, coined to describe the growth and opportunity presented in the more rural counties and communities across the U.S. And according to Jack Schultz, author of Boomtown USA...The Seven and ½ Keys to Big Success in Small Towns, Mason City is one of the top “agurbs” in the country. This places Mason City in the top 2.5% of all non-metro towns in the nation.

“This recognition is, in part, a result of some of the recent success our community has seen related to business growth and expansion,” said Steve Gales, President of the Mason City Economic Development Corporation. “There are a number of projects that we can point to as a community that have raised Mason City’s stature as a community committed to its own success.”

According to Dan Culhane, Executive Director of the Mason City Economic Development Corporation, “This recognition is another positive indication that we are on course to realize our objective, which is growing the Mason City/Clear Lake/Cerro Gordo County economy by working with our existing industries while simultaneously marketing the region to external audiences.”

Gales also said the author of this book will headline the development group’s annual meeting later this year. “We are excited to have Jack Schultz, who bestowed this recognition on our community, coming to Mason City in December. Mr. Schultz will keynote our annual meeting coming up later this year and I am anxious to learn more about his analysis of the communities he looked at as he put his book together.”

Communities had to meet numerous criteria. The first guideline used to select this elite list was that areas had to be non-MSA (Non - Metropolitan Statistical Areas – or smaller than 50,000 in population). Secondly, the cities were considered based on population growth, employment and per-capita income. State economic development leaders were then asked to recommend qualifying cities. This resulted in a nation-wide list of 1,231 counties, which were then more closely surveyed and narrowed down and the final cut was made to 397 cities.

According to author Jack Schultz, this area has demonstrated excellence in all of his “seven and ½ keys to success in smaller towns.” These include: Adopting a Can-Do Attitude, Shaping our Vision, Leveraging our Resources, Raising up Strong Leaders, Encouraging an Entrepreneurial Approach, Maintaining Local Control, Building our Brand and Embracing the Ever Changing Development Landscape.

According to Schultz’s book, the Mason City area has also demonstrated much to offer in other critical quality of life areas such as healthcare, education, recreation, culture, taxes, cost of living, crime rate, environment, climate and access to transportation.

“We have realized for quite some time that our community has what it takes to be successful in the economic development business. Add to that our growing partnership with Clear Lake and Cerro Gordo County in the formation of the North Central Iowa Growth Partnership and I think we have much to excited about,” said Gales.

More information on the annual meeting of the Mason City Economic Development Corporation will be made available, as the date gets closer. For more information on the Mason City E.D.C., log on to www.masoncityedc.com or www.ncigp.com.

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