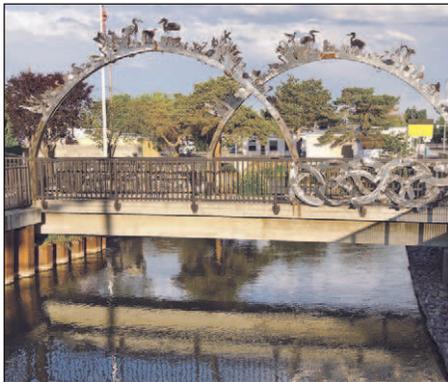


Small towns with big personalities

Valley cities grow in popularity

The ever-growing Boise Valley consists of a collection of towns and cities with their own personalities and strengths. While Idaho continues to grow at a slightly higher rate than the rest of the country, it's worthwhile to know average commute times are 20 percent less than the average U.S. commute. **By Dusty Parnell**



CALDWELL

This town is located in Southwest Idaho's wine country and is the state's sixth largest city, while still retaining its small town atmosphere. The town is also growing at nearly twice the national average. Caldwell is home to Idaho's oldest institution of higher learning, the College of Idaho, with about 1,100 students from more than 40 countries. Canyon County also happens to be the only county in the country to boast two Top 20 rodeos, including the Caldwell Night Rodeo, where "The Cowboys Are The Stars."

Since 2000, this booming town along the Boise River has grown by almost 70 percent and has grown three times the national average in the past two years. This is where you'll find the famous Eagle Fun Days celebration (they brag the World's Largest Rocky Mountain Oyster Feed) along with Eagle Island State Park. The town also has easy access to Highway 55 and recreational points north.

EAGLE



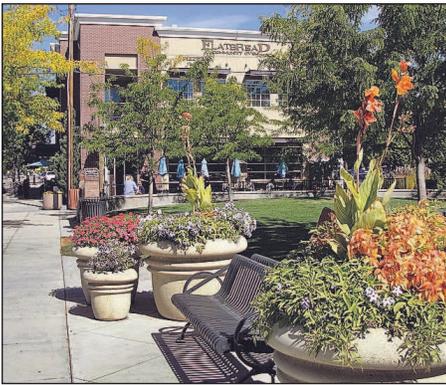
EMMETT

This quiet, rural town is the county seat of Gem County with a population of about 6,500. Irrigation projects in the early 1900s helped create this town as a major center for a farming and fruit-growing valley. The town is famous for its annual Cherry Festival, which celebrates its 80th year in 2014 and often attracts more than 40,000 people.

KUNA

The southernmost town in the Boise Valley metro area is 150 years old and has seen more than 6 percent growth in the past two years. It's a very family-oriented community with almost half its population under 18. Kuna is also located very close to the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area, as well as Celebration Park, Idaho's only archaeological park. Kuna's Highway 69 is one of only five Western Heritage Historic Highways in the state.





MERIDIAN

At four times the national growth rate, this city is primed to surpass Nampa as the second largest city in the state with well over 80,000 people. With more than 1,400 jobs created in 2013, Meridian boasts an unemployment rate of only 5 percent. More than 900 of those jobs were in healthcare, administration, science, and other professional fields. The city is also a five-time winner of the 100 Best Communities for Young People.

MIDDLETON

Another part of Idaho's history, this small town was once a stage station along the Oregon Trail and had a post office in 1866. It's the oldest town in Canyon County and got its name because it was located halfway between Boise and the Snake River ferry. It has a population of just under 6,000.



NAMPA

With more than 84,000 people, the city has seen a population growth of about 50 percent since 2000. Nampa is home to both the College of Western Idaho and Northwest Nazarene University, which celebrated its centennial in 2013. The Snake River Stampede is one of two rodeos in Canyon County that consistently rate in the Top 20 nationally. The rodeo will celebrate its 100th year in 2015. Also of note is the Warhawk Air Museum, located near the Nampa Airport.

STAR

This small town has grown from 1,800 people in 2000 to more than 6,000 people in 2012. With the completion of a new interchange from Highway 16 (north to Emmett) and U.S. Highway 26 (Chinden Boulevard), this little burg is on the cusp of becoming the next boom spot in the valley. The new interchange is expected to eventually connect to Interstate 84 for even more easy access.



BOISE ACCOLADES

#1 Best City for Kids

Livability.com | May 2014

#7 Best City in America - "Livability"

AreaVibes | May 2014

Fourth-Highest Percentage of Residents Who Bike to Work

U.S. Census Bureau | 2014

Top 10 Best Big Cities for Active Families

Outside Magazine | 2014

#7 Best Place to Raise a Family

Forbes | April 2014

#1 Lowest Cost of Doing Business in the Pacific U.S.

KPMG's Competitive Alternatives 2014

Top 10 Cities to Earn Coffee Bragging Rights

Bustle | April 2014

#1 Best City to Move to in 2014

SML | March 2014

#1 Region "Getting it Right"

TIME Magazine | March 17, 2014

#10 Best Place to Invest in Housing 2014

Forbes | February 2014

Top 24 Best Places to Live & Work 2014

Sunset Magazine | February 2014

Top 25 Best Places to Retire in 2014

Forbes | January 2014