

## **The U.S. Metros Least Touched by Recession**

**A combination of stable home prices and sizable sectors in health care, energy, government, and education kept these metropolitan areas relatively stable**

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America's strongest economies have one thing in common—home prices that never got too hot or too cold.

Home prices in metros such as San Antonio, Oklahoma City, Pittsburgh, Rochester, Little Rock, Ark., and Baton Rouge, La., remained steady through boom and bust. Although no metropolitan area entirely avoided the economic downturn, the most resilient metros were protected by a potent mix of recession-resistant jobs.

The upstate New York areas of Syracuse, Rochester, Albany, and Buffalo suffered from declining jobs in manufacturing, but got significant boosts from sizable health-care, education, and government sectors. Construction is booming in Baton Rouge, Louisiana's capital, as firms take advantage of financing for post-Katrina hurricane recovery work and service-related companies expand to meet the needs of a growing population. Omaha and the state of Iowa have relatively strong insurance sectors.

Texas, the last state to enter recession, has been bolstered by its oil and gas industries—which have also helped Oklahoma, North Dakota, and Louisiana. Texas also has many other things going for it, including affordable home prices and relatively low wages, which attract corporations.

BusinessWeek.com used data and analysis from the Brookings Institution's new MetroMonitor to come up with the nation's 40 strongest economies. The MetroMonitor, which measures the nation's health on a quarterly basis, ranks the top 100 metros based on job growth, unemployment, gross metropolitan product, and home prices.

**Rochester, NY** Overall rank: **20**

**The Rochester metropolitan area, near Lake Ontario, is home to Eastman Kodak and the University of Rochester. Employment in the Rochester metro peaked in the third quarter of last year. Gross metropolitan product in the fourth quarter was down 5% from the peak in the fourth quarter of last year. Home prices grew 3.1% in the second quarter compared with the same period a year earlier.**

**Job growth (since peak) rank: 10**

**Home price change (year over year) rank: 9**