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DFW, Houston tie for 10th in global competitiveness

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DALLAS — Dallas-Fort Worth tied with Houston for 10th in overall global competitiveness among 21 major metropolitan regions worldwide, boosted by low costs but hindered by lack of "tier 1" higher education, a two-year study by the Dallas Regional Chamber concludes.

The study, announced Monday, looked at five measures: business climate, talent, transportation access, resources and quality of life.

The region tied with Atlanta for No. 2 in business climate, behind only Singapore. It tied with Houston and Singapore for 11th in talent, including an 11th-place ranking for residents with post-secondary education.

Other rankings:

Access to markets, including transportation options, No. 10, tied with Houston, Atlanta and Chicago

Resources, including number of Fortune 500 companies and R&D spending, No. 10, tied with Houston

Quality of life, including health and material well-being, No. 8, tied with Amsterdam, Chicago and Houston

"We have some substantial strengths, and we have some notable challenges as we move forward," said Lyssa Jenkins, vice president of business information and research at the Dallas Regional Chamber.

Jenkins said the region must continue to build on its "core strength" in business climate, "be very attentive" to the region's strengths in logistics and trade, led by Dallas/Fort Worth Airport, and work on "growing our own" talent rather than importing it from outside the region.

Members of the study group said they were surprised that the region fared as well as it did in business climate.

"I knew we were good; I didn't realize we were that good," said Vince Puente of Southwest Office Systems in Tarrant County, chair of the chamber's 10-member Economists Council. The chamber staff, under direction of the council, produced the study.

"We really shine in the costs of doing business," and the U.S. political climate played into the analysis, Jenkins said. "You don't have to worry about a coup."

"Tier 1" university lacking

However, the region's 11th place ranking for residents with a post-secondary education "is an unequivocal weakness for the region," the study concludes. "We still don't have a tier 1" research university, Jenkins said.

Still, the relative youth of the work force is a strength, the study concluded. The small number of people in advanced services indicates a diverse economy — "potentially an asset rather than a deficit."

The region ranks eighth in technology, a measure of local work force skills. It ranks sixth in Nobel Prize winners who have worked here, ninth in top 500 universities, 11th in people of working age, 11th in people who hold post-secondary degrees or certificates, and 12th in people who work in advanced services.

Jenkins said D/FW Airport is a big strength for the region, but she noted that many of the world's top competitors to the North Texas region sport "at least two D/FWs."

"We need to understand the importance of Alliance, Love, the Dallas logistics hub," she said. "Where are we strong? Where can we be stronger?"

Most access leaders are major ports, such as No. 1 Hong Kong.

Tops in competitiveness 1. Tokyo

2 (tie) New York

2. (tie) Paris

4. Toronto

5. London

6. Los Angeles

7. Frankfurt

8. (tie) Amsterdam

8. (tie) Chicago

10. (tie) Dallas-Fort Worth

10. (tie) Houston

Source: Dallas Regional Chamber