

[Send to Printer](#)

[<< Back to Article](#)



## Commentary

J. Thomas Sadowski: Family-friendly Greater Baltimore

J. Thomas Sadowski

2008-02-27 08:00:00.0

Current rank: # **781** of 8,793

### BALTIMORE -

In the past decade, Greater Baltimore has grown to become one of the strongest economies in the [United States](#). Greater Baltimore is a booming hub for diversity, boasts an innovative knowledge-based economy and ranks in the top 10 nationally for both income and employment growth since 2000.

But that is only part of the story. Greater Baltimore is also a great place for families. And the good news is we are not the only ones saying it.

- » According to the April 16, 2006, edition of [The New York Times](#), [Baltimore](#) is one of the best cities for families.
- » Baltimore is the 12th-best place to live, according to the 2007 edition of the "Places Rated Almanac."
- » Worldwide ERC rated the Baltimore metro area seventh among large metro areas in its Best Cities for Relocating Families survey in 2006.
- » According to Money magazine's 2007 ranking, five towns in Greater Baltimore were ranked among the Top 100 best places to live in 2007. [Columbia/Ellicott City](#) was ranked No. 4 in 2006.
- » Baltimore was named a top-10 destination for summer travel in 2005 by Frommers.

Families often choose where they live based on the public school system and home affordability. According to Expansion Management magazine's 2006 education quotient, Greater Baltimore public schools placed third in the nation, driven by high-ranking suburban districts. [Newsweek's](#) 2007 ranking of the top 1,200 public schools in the United States lists 36 percent of [Maryland's](#) ranked schools as being in the Baltimore region — with a total of 28 public schools making the grade.

Greater Baltimore also has one of the most highly educated populations in the nation, which is directly related to an increase in the number of new businesses, entrepreneurial start-ups and an increase in average incomes. Despite the rise in housing prices over the past decade, Greater Baltimore remains one of the lowest housing price metro areas in the Northeast corridor with a majority of homes remaining affordable to suit families' needs. In fact, the share of homes affordable to median income residents is 51.7 percent, while the U.S. average is 43.9 percent and neighboring D.C. is only 37.7 percent.

One great aspect of Baltimore is that your family doesn't have to leave town to have a memorable family vacation. With family attractions like the National Aquarium, Port Discovery, [Maryland Science Center](#), [The Walters Art Museum](#), [B&O Railroad Museum](#), the Flag House and [Star-Spangled Banner Museum](#) and the [Baltimore Museum of Industry](#), Baltimore has a number of places to visit on weekends that are both entertaining and educational — for you and the kids. And you don't have to leave town to catch a show: Concerts, shows and plays can be found right here at the [Lyric Opera House](#) and the Hippodrome among other regional venues.

Or if your family enjoys sports, you could take in an [Orioles](#) or [Ravens](#) game. For sightseers, parts of Greater Baltimore are ideal for long bike rides or walks. In fact, according to a ranking of Best North American Neighborhoods in 2007, Fells Points made the top 10 based on its architecture, history, waterfront location and walkability.

Greater Baltimore's ideal location also provides convenient access to urban and rural getaways that are essential to the region's lifestyle — [Washington, D.C.](#), [Ocean City](#), Deep Creek, [Philadelphia](#) and [New York City](#) to name a few.

Access to these destinations is made easy for families with Greater Baltimore's abundance of transportation options. Greater Baltimore sits on the nation's busiest passenger rail line ([Amtrak](#)); the region is well-connected via the commuter rail system (MARC) with 86 daily trains running between [Washington](#) and Baltimore; and the region has an interconnectedness with the light rail and subway systems extending from the suburbs through downtown and to other surrounding areas.

Greater Baltimore is an adventure waiting to be explored by tourists and locals alike. Whether you have children or not, the Greater Baltimore region provides an ideal location for Maryland residents to work, play and raise a family.

J. Thomas (Tom) Sadowski is the executive vice president of the Economic Alliance of Greater Baltimore, a public-private economic development organization that markets Greater Baltimore. Tom can be reached at [jtsadowski@greaterbaltimore](mailto:jtsadowski@greaterbaltimore) or 410-637-4113.

*Examiner*