



Photo contributed by the Echo Press

Alexandria is fastest growing city of its kind in Minnesota

Aniche magazine targeted to real estate strategy and economic development recently named Alexandria as one of the fastest growing micropolitans in the nation.

Site selection magazine ranked Alexandria sixth in the nation in the number of business development projects.

Nationwide, Alexandria is one of 576 micropolitans, a non-urban community anchored by a town of no more than 50,000 people, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Jason Murray, executive director of Alexandria Area Economic Development Commission (AAEDC), said, “It’s nice because it separates the community from St. Cloud, Minneapolis...it really helped the smaller communities and rural regional centers, much like Alexandria, be able to compete, and it’s also really nice marketing designation for us.”

Alexandria is the top micropolitan in Minnesota.

“This is the second or third time that we’ve been the top micropolitan in Minnesota and I think it’s driven mainly by our industrial development,” Murray said.

One of nine projects that pushed Alexandria to its top ranking was 3M’s 20,000 square foot, \$2.2 million expansion last year.

In 2013, the AAEDC assisted with projects totaling \$9.6 million.

Article written by Amy Chaffins, of the Echo Press.

WHY DOES RANKING MATTER?

What does this ranking have to do with the average resident out there? Why does it matter to the community?

Murray explained “I think this is a nice designation mainly from the standpoint that we’ve had a lot of reinvestment; companies are choosing to make an investment here and I think that’s a good sign.”

Here’s the direct result of that reinvestment: The Alexandria area has more than 17,000 jobs.

“We’ve got more jobs than we’ve got people and we need the regional laborshed. Obviously the stronger footprint for the Alexandria region is based off of that number,” he said.

Murray said although Alexandria doesn’t come near the 27 projects listed for the top-ranked micropolitan, Wooster, Ohio, there’s significant investment in the local community.

“If you look back on the broader picture, you have this cycle – manufacturing makes an investment and all of a sudden you’ve got retail and services within a time period of 24 to 36 months after that. It’s a cycle,” Murray explained.

“There are a lot of positives happening for this community.”

2013 Top Micropolitans by Number of Projects

| Micropolitan | Count | Micropolitan | Count | Micropolitan | Count |
|---------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------|-------|
| 1 Wooster, Ohio | 27 | T41 Tifton, Ga. | 3 | T70 Natchitoches, La. | 2 |
| 2 Tupelo, Miss. | 19 | T41 Twin Falls, Idaho | 3 | T70 Adrian, Mich. | 2 |
| 3 Cullman, Ala. | 18 | T41 Rochelle, Ill. | 3 | T70 Escanaba, Mich. | 2 |
| 4 Findlay, Ohio | 15 | T41 Angola, Ind. | 3 | T70 Houghton, Mich. | 2 |
| 5 Morgan City, La. | 11 | T41 Burlington, Iowa-Ill. | 3 | T70 Marquette, Mich. | 2 |
| T6 Alexandria, Minn. | 9 | T41 Clinton, Iowa | 3 | T70 Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. | 2 |
| T6 Natchez, Miss.-La. | 9 | T41 Spirit Lake, Iowa | 3 | T70 Traverse City, Mich. | 2 |
| T6 Danville, Va. | 9 | T41 Frankfort, Ky. | 3 | T70 Brainerd, Minn. | 2 |
| 9 Clarksburg, W.Va. | 8 | T41 Ruston, La. | 3 | T70 Marshall, Minn. | 2 |
| T10 Batavia, N.Y. | 7 | T41 Alma, Mich. | 3 | T70 Owatonna, Minn. | 2 |
| T10 Lumberton, N.C. | 7 | T41 Sturgis, Mich. | 3 | T70 Red Wing, Minn. | 2 |
| T10 Fremont, Ohio | 7 | T41 Fergus Falls, Minn. | 3 | T70 Sikeston, Mo. | 2 |
| T10 Tiffin, Ohio | 7 | T41 Sedalia, Mo. | 3 | T70 Columbus, Miss. | 2 |
| T10 Wilmington, Ohio | 7 | T41 Columbus, Neb. | 3 | T70 Laurel, Miss. | 2 |
| T10 Dyersburg, Tenn. | 7 | T41 Malone, N.Y. | 3 | T70 Meridian, Miss. | 2 |
| T16 LaGrange, Ga. | 6 | T41 Plattsburgh, N.Y. | 3 | T70 Beatrice, Neb. | 2 |
| T16 Paducah, Ky.-Ill. | 6 | T41 Kinston, N.C. | 3 | T70 Hastings, Neb. | 2 |
| T16 Scottsbluff, Neb. | 6 | T41 Shelby, N.C. | 3 | T70 Kearney, Neb. | 2 |
| T19 Enterprise, Ala. | 5 | T41 Greenville, Ohio | 3 | T70 Lexington, Neb. | 2 |
| T19 Selma, Ala. | 5 | T41 New Philadelphia-Dover, Ohio | 3 | T70 Norfolk, Neb. | 2 |
| T19 Ashtabula, Ohio | 5 | T41 Norwalk, Ohio | 3 | T70 Roswell, N.M. | 2 |
| T19 Celina, Ohio | 5 | T41 Durant, Okla. | 3 | T70 Jamestown-Dunkirk-Fredonia, N.Y. | 2 |
| T19 Wapakoneta, Ohio | 5 | T41 Sunbury, Pa. | 3 | T70 Albemarle, N.C. | 2 |
| T19 Tullahoma-Manchester, Tenn. | 5 | T41 Shelbyville, Tenn. | 3 | T70 Forest City, N.C. | 2 |
| T19 Paris, Texas | 5 | T41 Cedar City, Utah | 3 | T70 Washington, N.C. | 2 |
| T19 Martinsville, Va. | 5 | T41 Manitowoc, Wis. | 3 | T70 Sidney, Ohio | 2 |
| T27 Talladega-Sylacauga, Ala. | 4 | T70 Albertville, Ala. | 2 | T70 Bartlesville, Okla. | 2 |
| T27 Cedartown, Ga. | 4 | T70 Americus, Ga. | 2 | T70 Meadville, Pa. | 2 |
| T27 Danville, Ky. | 4 | T70 Cordele, Ga. | 2 | T70 Oil City, Pa. | 2 |
| T27 Mount Sterling, Ky. | 4 | T70 Dublin, Ga. | 2 | T70 Pottsville, Pa. | 2 |
| T27 Ogdensburg-Massena, N.Y. | 4 | T70 St. Marys, Ga. | 2 | T70 Orangeburg, S.C. | 2 |
| T27 Mount Airy, N.C. | 4 | T70 Vidalia, Ga. | 2 | T70 Brookings, S.D. | 2 |
| T27 Roanoke Rapids, N.C. | 4 | T70 Waycross, Ga. | 2 | T70 Vermillion, S.D. | 2 |
| T27 Jamestown, N.D. | 4 | T70 Burley, Idaho | 2 | T70 Athens, Tenn. | 2 |
| T27 Bellefontaine, Ohio | 4 | T70 Quincy, Ill.-Mo. | 2 | T70 Crossville, Tenn. | 2 |
| T27 Mount Vernon, Ohio | 4 | T70 Marshalltown, Iowa | 2 | T70 Greeneville, Tenn. | 2 |
| T27 Sandusky, Ohio | 4 | T70 Muscatine, Iowa | 2 | T70 Gainesville, Texas | 2 |
| T27 Seneca, S.C. | 4 | T70 Ottumwa, Iowa | 2 | T70 Raymondville, Texas | 2 |
| T27 Lewisburg, Tenn. | 4 | T70 Spencer, Iowa | 2 | T70 Moses Lake, Wash. | 2 |
| T27 Union City, Tenn./Ky. | 4 | T70 Emporia, Kan. | 2 | T70 Beaver Dam, Wis. | 2 |
| T41 Blytheville, Ark. | 3 | T70 Garden City, Kan. | 2 | T70 Marinette, Wis.-Mich. | 2 |
| T41 El Dorado, Ark. | 3 | T70 London, Ky. | 2 | T70 Whitewater-Elkhorn, Wis. | 2 |
| T41 Okeechobee, Fla. | 3 | T70 Murray, Ky. | 2 | T70 Wisconsin Rapids-Marshfield, Wis. | 2 |

Source: Conway Data, Inc.'s New Plant Database