

Boise, ID

Until recently, Boise was a well-kept secret. No longer. Today it tops national surveys as the “Jewel of the West,” Best Place in USA for business and careers,” “One of the hottest tech cities in the country,” “Sportstown USA,” the “number one biking town in the US,” and an “oasis for retirees.” As the State’s capital, and the only major city within three hundred miles in any direction, Boise enjoys educational, cultural, medical and sports amenities far beyond what its population of 185,000 would otherwise warrant. Boiseans are four-season outdoors people. Unfortunately, Boise’s quality of life is threatened by the same suburban sprawl that has plagued every other large western city. The independent, indeed libertarian, streak of its one-party Legislature and citizenry keeps Idaho at the bottom of the nation in spending for early childhood education, mental health and social services. Its agricultural economy in adjacent counties is supported by migrant laborers who live with inadequate wages and fear of I.C.E. raids that shatter their lives and splinter their families. Catholic Charities and other community service organizations fight an uphill battle to feed the hungry and shelter the homeless.

