

## Quality of Life?

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Many in Durango take advantage of multiple (and many times simultaneous) seasonal employment opportunities working late evening shifts and weekends. Families in the region creatively balance their time between work, play, and child schedules maximizing daylight hours. Why do we do it? For many, it is a search for the intangible quality of life.

Is quality of life quantifiable? Probably not; however, as a financial analyst and statistician, I couldn't prevent myself from tracking down some of the routine and esoteric facts about the region we call home. In Region 9, the five cities/towns of Durango, Cortez, Pagosa Springs, Dove Creek, and Silverton, were evaluated and compared with other Colorado communities. Consider some of the following key points:

- Considering the plethora of outdoor and cultural activities found in the local area, these Region 9 towns are some of the least expensive 'resort-like' communities in the state. With a median home value-to-median income level ratio less than Denver and more than half that of Telluride, Boulder, Vail, and Steamboat Springs, the region sports a sizeable cost-of-living advantage.
- Weather, weather, weather; the region boasts San Diego-like weather 8 months out of the year, with more sunny days than Southern California (275 days), plus a little powder to ease the transition between fall and spring seasons.
- Durango has one of the most educated populations (nearly 30% have at least a Bachelor's degree), youngest (median age 29), most employed (unemployment 3.9%), and best public school systems (as measured by standardized third and tenth grade examinations) in the state.
- Durango is home to Fort Lewis College whose School of Business Administration is one of only four institutions its size in the United States to receive AACSB accreditation, of which only 10% of all business schools in the world have attained.
- Cortez is one of the most diverse economies in the region supported by agriculture and tourism, plus it has one of the highest homeownership rates (nearly 60%) in the state.
- Pagosa Springs, Dove Creek, and Silverton have some of the highest air quality ratings in the country, and a high percentage of entrepreneurs working from their homes (more than twice the state average).
- Job growth in our local region (averaging 6%) exceeds Denver and most resort-destination communities in Colorado.

For a more detailed perspective of Region 9 and its relation to Colorado and the nation, please reference the following tables. Detailed information from the US Census Bureau, US Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Association of Realtors, US Department of Health, National Climatic Data Center, and Colorado Department of Education have been compiled to provide a demographic and economic picture of the region in comparison to Denver and other Colorado communities.

	<b>DURANGO</b>	<b>CORTEZ</b>	<b>PAGOSA SPRINGS</b>	<b>DOVE CREEK</b>	<b>SILVERTON</b>
<b>People</b>					
Population <sup>a</sup>	15,501	8,246	1,823	683	541
White	84%	74%	57%	91%	89%
Hispanic	10%	13%	37%	4%	9%
American Indian	3%	7%	3%	4%	1%
Median Age	29	36	36	38	46
People per Household	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.4	2
Currently Married	39%	54%	50%	60%	51%
Married with Children	14%	21%	21%	21%	13%
Single with Children	8%	11%	12%	10%	11%
4-yr College Degree	28%	12%	11%	8%	26%
Work from Home	7%	4%	5%	2%	12%
Median Household Income <sup>b</sup>	40,900	33,567	34,375	32,078	35,561
Unemployment Rate	3.90%	5.50%	4.20%	6.70%	10.80%
Job Growth	3.10%	4.1%	2.80%	5.40%	15%
<b>Homes</b>					
Median Home Value <sup>c</sup>	388,250	187,929	199,547	116,023	264,702
Median Age of Home	37	30	27	35	63
Homeowners	49%	59%	50%	65%	41%
Median Home/Median Income	9.49	5.60	5.81	3.62	7.44
<b>Environment</b>					
Air Quality <sup>d</sup>	59	70	89	94	100
Water Quality	60	54	40	60	77
Days of Precipitation <sup>e</sup>	70	74	66	73	72
Days Mostly Sunny	266	240	287	243	250
Summer Temperature	83	86	81	83	68
Fall Temperature	66	67	63	61	52
Winter Temperature	44	43	41	38	33
Spring Temperature	63	62	59	59	47
<b>Education</b>					
3rd Grade Math <sup>f</sup>	31% H	27% L	12% L	13% H	N/A
3rd Grade Reading	29% H	27% L	11% H	23% L	N/A
10th Grade Math	10% H	48% L	19% L	29% L	N/A
10th Grade Reading	13% H	2% L	6% H	4% L	N/A

a - US Census Bureau

b - US Bureau of Labor Statistics

c - National Association of Realtors

d - US Department of Health

e - National Climatic Data Center

f - Colorado Department of Education; Note -- H refers to higher than the state average and L refers to lower than the state average

	TELLURIDE	BOULDER	DENVER	VAIL	STEAMBOAT SPRINGS
<b>People</b>					
Population <sup>a</sup>	2,323	92,148	558,246	4,557	9,963
White	88%	82%	53%	90%	92%
Hispanic	9%	10%	36%	7%	4%
American Indian	1%	0.50%	2%	0.30%	0.40%
Median Age	34	32	34	34	34
People per Household	2.1	2.2	2.3	2	2.3
Currently Married	30%	38%	43%	32%	45%
Married with Children	12%	15%	15%	9%	20%
Single with Children	7%	6%	8%	3%	7%
4-yr College Degree	45%	36%	22%	45%	37%
Work from Home	9%	7%	4%	5%	6%
Median Household Income <sup>b</sup>	60,585	52,198	46,076	66,115	63,744
Unemployment Rate	7.10%	5%	5.90%	5.40%	3.70%
Job Growth	0.10%	1.90%	3.40%	-1.40%	-0.80%
<b>Homes</b>					
Median Home Value <sup>c</sup>	1,135,895	693,155	379,940	1,155,049	617,324
Median Age of Home	19	30	44	24	20
Homeowners	21%	48%	50%	21%	40%
Median Home/Median Income	18.75	13.28	8.25	17.47	9.68
<b>Environment</b>					
Air Quality <sup>d</sup>	78	35	21	60	55
Water Quality	73	100	87	100	100
Days of Precipitation <sup>e</sup>	72	91	91	81	86
Days Mostly Sunny	242	245	245	247	242
Summer Temperature	74	84	87	75	74
Fall Temperature	53	66	62	49	51
Winter Temperature	33	47	43	27	32
Spring Temperature	51	64	61	47	50
<b>Education</b>					
3rd Grade Math <sup>f</sup>	14% H	35% H	2% H	20% H	12% H
3rd Grade Reading	13% H	39% H	3% L	10% H	7% H
10th Grade Math	87% H	80% H	1%L	10% H	54% H
10th Grade Reading	41% H	15% H	2% L	6% H	16% H

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b - US Bureau of Labor Statistics

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