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Site Selection again names Statesville-Mooresville No. 1 micropolitan

By [Bethany Fuller](#) | Statesville R&L

Leaving other micropolitan areas in the dust, Statesville and Mooresville racked up 20 economic development projects in 2009.

Site Selection magazine once again ranked the Statesville-Mooresville micropolitan area No. 1 for new and expanded corporate facility projects. Sharing the No. 2 spot were Wooster, Ohio, and Pottsville, Penn. Each reported 13 projects.

"At the end of the day, however, it's all about performance," said Ron Starner, general manager of Site Selection magazine and Conway Data Inc. "As they like to say in NASCAR â an industry that you guys know very well â you either win or you lose. ... Statesville-Mooresville is winning, and the actual project numbers prove that."

It is the seventh time in the past eight years Statesville-Mooresville was ranked No. 1 in the planning industry publication's annual rankings.

The U.S. Office of Management and Budget defines micropolitans as urbanized areas based around a core city or town with a population of 10,000 to 50,000, Starner said.

The Statesville-Mooresville micropolitan area is one of 576 nationwide.

Statesville-Mooresville dominates the micro category year after year because of its products, location, work force and business climate, Starner said.

Iredell County Commissioner Steve Johnson said the county has many pro-business attributes. "I think this points to our ability to react to economic conditions," he said.

Site Selection magazine has a circulation of 44,000 readers, Starner said. Around 54 percent of those subscribers are top decision makers such as CEOs, he said.

In the site selection industry, consultants consistently review the rankings released in the March issue, Starner said.

In order for a project to qualify, it must be a corporate facility expansion of \$1 million or greater, 50 new jobs or greater or 20,000 square feet or greater of new floor space, he said.

Greater Statesville Development Corp. Executive Director Mike Smith said he believes the area has a running start this year and the ranking helps in marketing the area.

"Statesville and Mooresville have done this well collectively over the past decade," he said. "We will continue to use this award as proof that Iredell County is a great place for business, and we are a consistent performer."

Mooresville-South Iredell Economic Development Executive Director Russ Rogerson said the amount of facility planning activity in the area has gone up this year.

"I do believe that there are people out there and there are projects out there," he said.