

Amid recession, Austin makes a remarkable ascension



CBS 42 Reporter: [Jason Wheeler](#)
Email: jwheeler@keyetv.com



Austin makes meteoric rise in rankings of top places for business and more jobs are expected to be created in the near future.

A new list shows that business in Austin is thriving compared to other hard hit parts of the country. It's a trend that doesn't surprise some who do business in the Capital City.

In their first big release earlier this year, Austin based Twisted Pixel introduced video gamers to "The Maw," an animated character with an endless appetite. Much like the overeating creature, its creators

have grown quickly.

"Really we grew so fast that we just had to slam some stuff down," says Twisted Pixel's CEO, Michael Wilford, referring to the folding tables that have become desks in his company's South Austin workspace.

The thriving business has almost doubled from the staff of 8 it came here with last November. Hiring skilled talent to fill their demand has not been a problem in tech rich Austin.

"We just kind of rattle the bushes and find people who are interested," Wilford gloats, a far cry from the environment in Indiana where the firm started up before moving to Austin.

Austin's talented workforce, relatively cheaper cost of doing business, and a good quality of life has drawn dozens of executives here so far this year, all of them eyeing a new place to call home.

"It has been amazing this first quarter," says Dave Porter of the Austin Chamber of Commerce.

He believes the interest the city is seeing explains why Austin moved up on Forbes.com's best places for business, jumping from 47th place last year to 8th place this year.

"You know that doesn't surprise me in the least. I don't know who is ahead of us, but if we're competing they better watch out," says Blair Williamson, who is starting up an IT solutions franchise in Austin. The parent company, CMIT Solutions, is already headquartered here, and Williamson is confident his initial staff of two will grow quickly, along with his business.

That kind of confidence may not be so evident in many places around the country right now, but it seems to prevail in some corners of the Austin economy. "My friends across the country are jealous," says Dave Porter. From his Chamber of Commerce offices that overlook a rapidly expanding downtown skyline, Porter acknowledges he is now actively recruiting more companies to relocate here. Just like The Maw in Twisted Pixel's video game, Austin's economic engine appears to be feeding on anything it can.

And Porter expects more good news ahead. Sometime in April, he expects a "major" announcement that another company will be expanding in Austin, bringing a substantial number of jobs.

Stay tuned.