

Bardstown again among U.S. top 10 micropolitans

By Randy Patrick

Thursday, April 26, 2018 at 2:56 pm

Bardstown has again been chosen by Site Selection magazine, an industry trade publication that tracks investment, as one of the top 10 micropolitans in the nation.

This is the second consecutive year the city and its surrounding area have made the top 10 and the third year in the top 100.

For 2017, Bardstown was tied with Danville and Frankfort for 10th place. Richmond and Berea together ranked fifth.

In 2016, Bardstown ranked seventh.

In 2015, it was tied with eight other communities for 13th place.

A micropolitan is defined by the White House Office of Management and Budget as a statistical area made up of one or more adjacent counties with at least one urban core and a population of at least 10,000 but less than 50,000, plus adjacent territory that has “a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured by commuting ties.”

Mayor Dick Heaton mentioned the ranking during the City Council meeting Tuesday.

“This is a great recognition for Bardstown and Nelson County,” Heaton said.

The ranking is for 2017, when manufacturing companies announced eight new projects in the community creating \$286 million in investment and about 350 new jobs. Two of the projects were new, and six were expansions.

The biggest of the projects, Kentucky Owl Bourbon, accounted for \$129 million. The distillery, owned by the Stoli Group, should break ground by year’s end, Heaton said.

The other projects are “already going,” he said.

“It’s quite uncommon that a city our size would have that much new investment,” Heaton said. “It’s a great accomplishment.”

It’s also a collaborative achievement.

“Not one individual or entity or organization can make this happen,” the mayor said.

Rather, it is one that involves the Bardstown City Council, Nelson County Fiscal Court, the Planning Commission, Chamber of Commerce, Nelson County Economic Development Agency, Bardstown Industrial Development Corporation and others, and the people of the community.

He mentioned that when Takigawa broke ground this week, the company’s president, Hiroyuki Takigawa, said the reason the company chose Bardstown for its plastic packaging plant was “the warmth and friendliness” of the city’s leaders and the way the people made them feel welcome.



FORREST BERKSHIRE/The Kentucky Standard

Mayor Dick Heaton presents Bardstown's flag to Hiroyuki Takigawa, president of Takigawa Corporation, at the company's groundbreaking ceremony Friday for its first U.S. facility, which is scheduled to open next year and employ up to 180 people.

"There is a lot of synergy right now here in our community that is working very well, and this recognition speaks for itself," he said.

He indicated that the recent industrial development is a factor in Nelson County having an unemployment rate of 3.1 percent, which is below the state's average of 3.8 and the national average of more than 4 percent.

Heaton thanked the council members for their role in the success, including putting together incentive packages for companies.

"We've been on a roll as far as industry goes," Bill Conway, a member of the Bardstown Industrial Development Corporation board and its past president, said Wednesday after leaving The Bardstown Bourbon Company, which had that day installed its second still. BBCo. is a new company that has undergone multiple expansions.

Near BBCo in the Nelson County Industrial Park is another new manufacturer, Thai Summit, which is expected to soon triple its production capacity.

Kim Huston, president of the Nelson County Economic Development Agency, said that Bardstown has been on the list every year since it has been designated a micropolitan, and that investment in 2017 was the largest level since NCEDA has kept statistics.

She and other development leaders, she said, are "always honored" to be on the list.

And she mentioned that the expansion of existing companies is "just as important to us" as the two new international companies that announced location here.

Kentucky was ranked third in the nation for 2017 by Site Selection for having the most top micropolitan sites, behind only Ohio and Georgia.

In addition to the cities in the top 10, other Kentucky cities that were listed in the top 100 (including ties) were Glasgow, London, Paducah, Murray, Somerset, Madisonville and Maysville.