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## **Study: Charlotte a place to build personal wealth**

By Christina Rexrode

Charlotte may play second string to New York in banking assets, but at least it's easier for residents here to put away a little money.

In a study on the relative value of earnings in 69 large cities – being released today by Salary.com – the city that never sleeps ranked dead last. Charlotte was No. 15, and Raleigh clocked in just behind at No. 17 (with Nashville in between).

First place went to Plano, Texas, a fast-growing Dallas suburb that's the birthplace of Lance Armstrong and the home of J.C. Penney Co., Frito-Lay and Ross Perot's Perot Systems Corp.

The study measured the salaries, cost of living and unemployment rates of cities with at least 250,000 residents – Plano has about 255,000 – then ranked them according to how easy it is for residents to build personal wealth.

The top cities were those with the largest difference between pay and costs. The study also considered each city's diversity of industry, education levels, proximity to colleges and universities, travel time to work, and other factors.

Rounding out the bottom five were Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Honolulu and San Francisco (the country's No. 3 banking center by assets). "These are not the worst places to live," said Bill Coleman, the chief compensation officer at Salary.com. "They're just the worst places to try to save money."

At the top of the list, behind Plano, were Aurora, Colo.; Omaha, Neb.; Minneapolis; and Albuquerque, N.M.