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Dallas' Monkee Michael Nesmith has something to say: That was then, this is now

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Michael Ainsworth/Staff Photographer

Fair warning: This is an interview with Michael Nesmith, but not once during this lengthy conversation did the man who went to the same northwest Dallas high school that I did mention the word "Monkees." Which, yes, might seem strange seeing as how Facebook tells us Nesmith and the Monkees are trending.

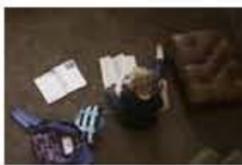
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Aerial view of homes in Wylie with Lavon Lake in the distance. (Vernon Bryant/The Dallas Morning News)

By NerdWallet

Staff Writer

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The North Texas community of Wylie boasts access to two lakes, affordable homes and top-rated schools — all cited as reasons why it's the top small city in the U.S. for families, according to an analysis by NerdWallet.

The big state of Texas actually dominates NerdWallet's top 10 list, with communities near Austin and Houston also getting high marks.

NerdWallet examined the most-recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau, GreatSchools and NeighborhoodScout for 245 places in the U.S. with populations from 25,000 to 100,000. The analysis considers home values and affordability, median annual income, growth and factors that families consider, including school quality and crime. To see the full story and detailed methodology, [click here](#).

If you are a homebuyer looking to narrow your choice of locations in a big or small city, try NerdWallet's home [affordability calculator](#) to learn how much you can pay toward a mortgage each month while also staying on top of debts, spending and savings.

Most of the small cities on the top 10 list are suburbs, with many less than 30 miles from the nearest big city. Families in these places will find the convenience of higher-paying jobs and other big-city amenities without long commutes.

Best small cities for families

1. Wylie

This city, about 30 miles northeast of Dallas, is between Lavon Lake and Lake Ray Hubbard, which means it offers access to outdoor activities for families. The city of 44,000 residents has the second-most affordable homes in the top 10, with a median home value of \$154,600 in 2014. Of all 245 cities analyzed, Wylie has the seventh-highest median annual income growth, which jumped over 19% from 2009 to 2014. Schools in Wylie earned a rating of 9 out of 10 by reviewers at GreatSchools.org.



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