



Living clean in Santa Fe while St. Louis has the blues

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By Reuters

DALLAS — Residents of the arid, high desert city of Santa Fe, N.M., may have thin air and not much water, but they do live in the U.S. city with the healthiest environment.

According to a survey conducted by the magazine *Organic Style*, Santa Fe has the best scores of any city in the United States for being free of toxins in the environment, while St. Louis, Mo., was at the bottom of the list, at slot number 125.

The survey, released in this month's issue of the magazine, looked at factors such as exposure to agricultural pollutants and general toxins as well as overall air quality. About 5,500 pieces of data were crunched to produce the results.

The top five cities in the survey were Santa Fe; Rapid City, S.D.; Grand Junction, Colo.; Olympia, Wash.; and Fort Myers, Fla. At the bottom of the list were Cleveland, New York, Detroit, Chicago, and St. Louis.

"The environment does affect you, and it can trigger or exacerbate a whole raft of diseases," said Helen Rogan, the executive editor of the magazine, who cautioned that exposure to unhealthy elements in the environment is not an overwhelming factor in determining health.

"People should not panic immediately because environment accounts for about 10 to 20 percent of a person's health," she said.

Honolulu, Hawaii, was ranked as having the healthiest environment among big cities, while the gambling centers of Atlantic City, N.J., and Las Vegas, Nev., also scored high for their environmental quality.

But having a healthy environment does not necessarily mean having a healthy life. The article cites the case of Robert Weinholt, the author of a book on healthy metropolitan areas. He moved to Santa Fe only to discover that he became ill in the city with the healthiest environment in the United States because he was allergic to the plants and dust of the high desert.

Source: Reuters