

High rankings well deserved

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Area residents needn't fret if they're not regular readers of Business Facilities magazine. After all, it's a trade publication that describes itself as "the leading location adviser for site selection professionals."

But area residents, not to mention business and civic leaders, ought to feel pretty good about the magazine's recent rankings of Manhattan and of Kansas. As a story in Tuesday's Mercury noted, Business Facilities ranked Manhattan second for growth potential among U.S. cities with populations of up to 200,000. What's more, the publication ranked Kansas fifth — a jump from 10th since last year — in the category of "Biotechnology Strength." That, Business Facilities Editor-in-Chief Jack Rogers says, "is one of our most important and fiercely competitive rankings categories."

"Kansas clearly has shown that it is a biotech force to be reckoned with, and it has staked a claim to a leadership position for years to come," he said.

The glowing reports on our city and our state stem largely from the Kansas Bioscience Authority and the successful collaboration involving the city, Kansas State University and the state to land NBAF — the National Bio- and Agro-Defense Facility.

As the magazine said, "Already established as the epicenter of a national animal health corridor, Kansas has been awarded with a trifecta of major government biotech research facilities, including the \$650 million NBAF biodefense lab, the Arthropod-Borne Animal Disease Research Lab and the Center of Excellence for Emerging and Zoonotic Animal Diseases at Kansas State University."

Said Mr. Rogers: "The research undertaken in Manhattan will continue to grow in importance." He credited the Kansas Bioscience Authority for establishing a "solid foundation for exponential development that will lift the entire region."

The report gave Kent Glasscock, president of NISTAC — KSU's National Institute for Strategic Technology Acquisition and Commercialization — and Manhattan Chamber of Commerce President Lyle Butler plenty of reason to crow. The ranking and the attention are, as Mr. Glasscock said, "a significant milestone," and Mr. Butler rightly acknowledged that Kansas Bioscience Authority funding has been "a huge jump-start."

Although Mr. Glasscock was right to point out that one of the challenges now is "to turn potential into fact, into benefits..." he hardly overstated the accomplishments to date when he added, "But goodness, we have come so far."

Indeed we have. Most gratifying, however, is that the best is yet to come.