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More accolades recognize great county

We could get used to this.

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In fact, we probably already have.

Once again, Columbia County has received a national honor. Money magazine last week ranked Martinez as the 76th best place to live in the United States.

Everyone remembers Money's 32nd-place ranking of Evans two years ago, and the fact that no local area made the ranks in 2006.

But bear in mind: The magazine has changed its rules every year.

For example, in the first year - 2005 - the magazine's criteria began with places having a population higher than 14,000; at the time, it listed unincorporated Evans' population at 27,600. Then, in 2006, the magazine ranked places with populations higher than 50,000; that took Evans out of the running.

This year, the magazine judged places with populations ranging from 7,500 to 50,000. While Evans didn't make the list, Martinez (estimated population, 31,000) did. The gateway to Columbia County was ranked third among three Georgia communities making the list, along with Suwanee (10th place) and Peachtree City (64th).

What does all this mean? Well, for one thing, however the list has been juggled, it still demonstrates what most of us already know: Columbia County is a great place to live.

"I think the best place to live in the country is Columbia County, wherever you live in Columbia County," says Tommy Mercer, who represents much of Martinez on the County Commission.

Commissioners, the Chamber of Commerce, the county's Development Authority and the Convention and Visitors Bureau - not to mention real estate agents - will do their part to brag about the ranking. That was certainly the case with Evans' honors; the county even created a seal touting the 32nd-place ranking and prints it on various publications, and the CVB leads off its Web site with a mention of the honor.

It might be a little problematic to ask whether the information now should be updated, which would appear to reduce the ranking from 32nd to 76th. It's probably a better idea to just point out that with two localities having made Money's list, Columbia County is recognized as one of the top 100 communities in the entire country.

That's plenty to brag about all by itself - but we already knew it!

