

# FORTUNE SMALL BUSINESS

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SPECIAL REPORT  
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Kevin Toohill runs  
Beartooth Mapping  
from Billings, Mont.,  
our No. 1 small city.

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Educated talent and low overhead revitalize Pittsburgh.

**W**e've all heard the hype: In our wireless world, your company can thrive from a loft in Brooklyn or a houseboat in Hawaii. Where you are doesn't matter, because we're all on the same vast, virtual plane. Right?

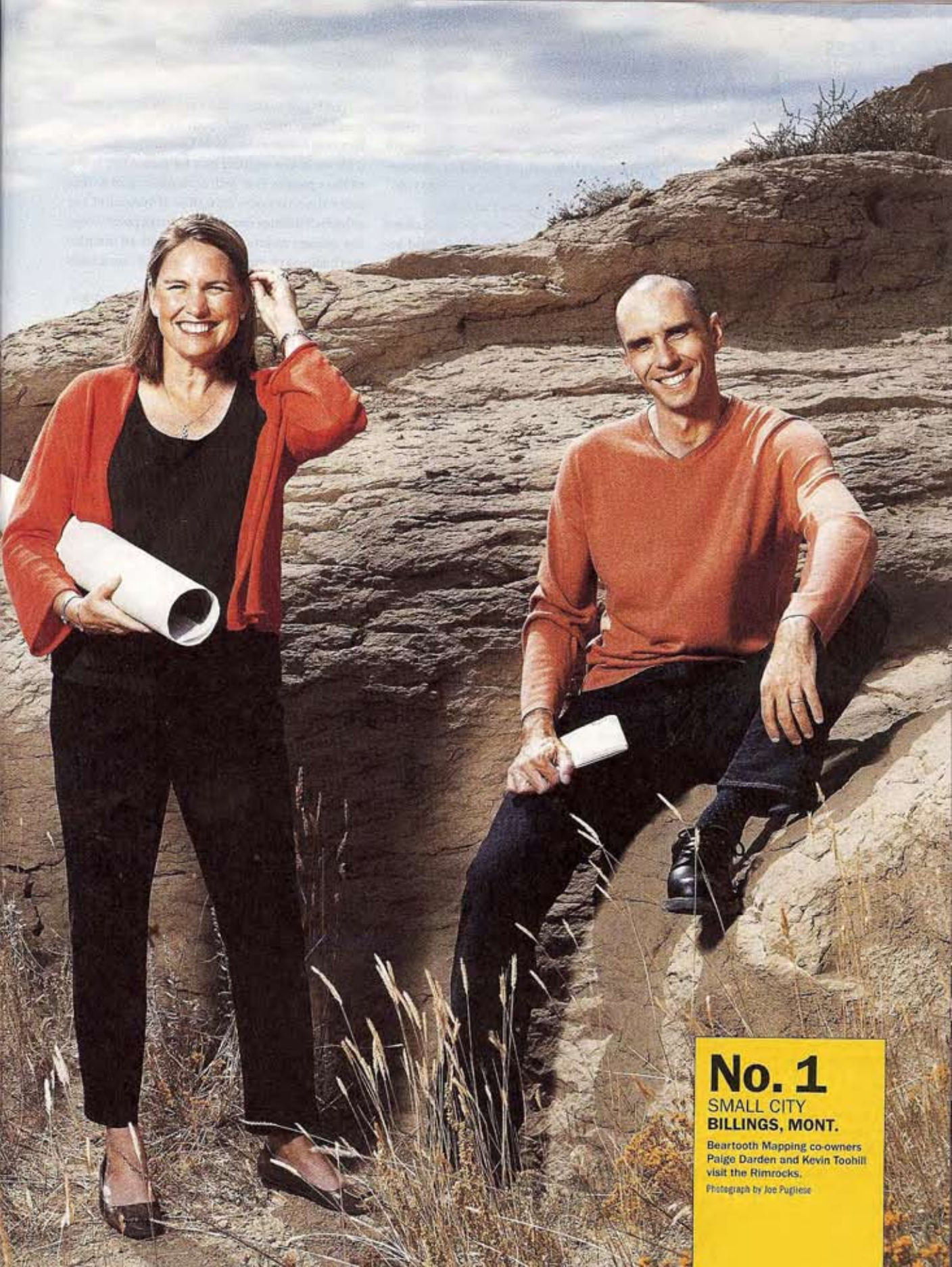
Wrong. Location matters more than ever before. The Great Recession redrew the map of America. Entire towns sank in the subprime mortgage crisis; capitals of finance and manufacturing were brought to their knees.

And while the headlines heralded each new disaster, a quieter but equally important phenomenon was taking place. A handful of communities—places like Houston, Oklahoma City and Huntsville, Ala. on *FSB's* annual Best Places to Launch list—were soldiering through the recession almost unscathed.

At the same time, only 42% of U.S. entrepreneurs believe that their current location is the best place for them to thrive, according to the latest *FSB/Zogby* International poll. We believe that figure should be much higher. This year *FSB* partnered with the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation to find the 50 most business-friendly communities in America. With help from Robert Fairlie, an economist and leading scholar of entrepreneurship at the University of California, Santa Cruz, we sifted through such data as per capita income, hourly wages, workforce quality, crime rates, taxes and foreclosures.

# The Best Places to Launch

**FSB and the Kauffman Foundation present 50 great towns to grow your business.**



## No. 1

SMALL CITY  
BILLINGS, MONT.

Beartooth Mapping co-owners  
Paige Darden and Kevin Toohill  
visit the Rimrocks.

Photograph by Joe Pugliese

