

WASHINGTONIAN

May 2009

washingtonian.com

26 Reasons to LOVE Washington



*Cute zoo babies! The world's best library!
And lots more reasons we're lucky to live here.*



Employers Want to Be Here

Companies see this region as an ideal home

BRAND-name companies are falling in love with Washington. Last year, Volkswagen abandoned the Motor City for Herndon. Hilton Hotels is giving up its Beverly Hills cachet for Tysons Corner. Even Google, king of Silicon Valley, has opened a shop in Reston.

That's not to mention the dozen or so companies from Israel, England, China, and elsewhere planting their flags in Montgomery County.

These new arrivals see Washington as the land of milk and honey. Three airports—and increasing international flights from Dulles—make the region an ideal gateway. The area's workers are among the most educated in the country. And increased federal contracting makes proximity to Congress and the agencies a big plus.

Quirks of the region's demographics helped win over some transplants. Volkswagen, which also produces Audi cars, discovered that Washington has one of the country's highest concentration of VW and Audi owners. That means its 400 or so workers will get customer feedback even at neighborhood barbecues—conversations that could prove invaluable, company officials say.

International Baccalaureate, the Switzerland-based company that produces a rigorous international K–12 curriculum, will soon pick a spot between Rockville and Chevy Chase to build one of its three global centers. The Washington area is home to 93 IB programs, which should provide a deep pool of IB-trained educators to hire from. The company also was attracted to the county's diversity and embrace of international cultures.

"Montgomery County lives and breathes that feeling," says the company's Drew Deutsch.

Hilton Hotels saw advantages in Washington's cost of living, which can look inviting to a Los Angeles-based operation. Even Washington's traffic seems tame compared with LA backups.

The Marriott and Choice hotel empires anchor strong hospitality and real-estate industries in Washington that offer Hilton great access to business talent, company officials say.

For Chris Nassetta, Hilton's CEO, the company's arrival later this year will be a homecoming. He grew up in Arlington, married his high-school sweetheart, and headed Host Hotels & Resorts, a Marriott spinoff in Bethesda, before taking the Hilton helm in 2007.

—DREW LINDSAY