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# Texas Yes!

Texas Department of Agriculture

September 2006

## SPECIAL FOCUS: RECRUITING RETIREEES

From Susan Combs,  
Commissioner

In rural Texas, silver is as good as gold. The numbers tell the story: **Thirty-one percent of the population will be 55 or older in 25 years.** These silver-haired boomers will be the healthiest, longest lived, best educated and most affluent retirees in history – **representing \$2.3 trillion in annual spending power.**

**N**ot content to sit idle, this generation sees retirement as a time to be active and involved.

Nearly half expect to continue working and volunteering into their 70s or later. As many as one in five will permanently relocate upon retirement.

Resort communities catering to active seniors are big business for suburban developers. Beyond the seasonal migration of snow birds, Texas is the sixth most popular relocation destination for retirees who are increasingly moving from metro areas to smaller rural communities with access to urban services. And contrary to myth, migrating seniors actually add more to the economy and pay more in taxes than they take out in services. For small towns and rural counties, recruiting retirees is a win-win proposal.

### A Return to Rural Texas

One couple relocating to rural Texas creates the economic impact of 3.7 manufacturing jobs. Retiring couples generate an even greater return – creating a dependable part-time workforce and providing civic leadership for community service efforts.

Recognizing the economic potential of promoting Texas as a tourism and retirement destination to retirees and pre-retirees both in and outside Texas, Rep. Roy Blake Jr. of Nacogdoches and Sen. Todd Staples of Palestine sponsored legislation that created the Texas Certified Retirement Community Program. Administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), the self-funding program includes plans for statewide marketing campaigns, a “Retire in

Texas” Web site, brochures, special events and more.

Any community in Texas wanting to showcase itself as a retirement and tourism destination can be certified through the application and review process. Emphasis is placed on desirable attributes including affordable housing, quality health care, cultural opportunities and low crime rates.

Interested communities designate a board to serve as the community’s official sponsor and resource team, complete the application process, submit a fee based on population and satisfy all program requirements, maintain program standards and complete re-certification in five years.

For more information on the Texas Certified Retirement Community Program, contact TDA’s Rural Economic Development Division at (877) 428-7848 or (512) 936-0273.



businesses or industries. Relocating retirees also generally have higher incomes than the newly employed, generating greater tax revenues and more jobs.

### SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS

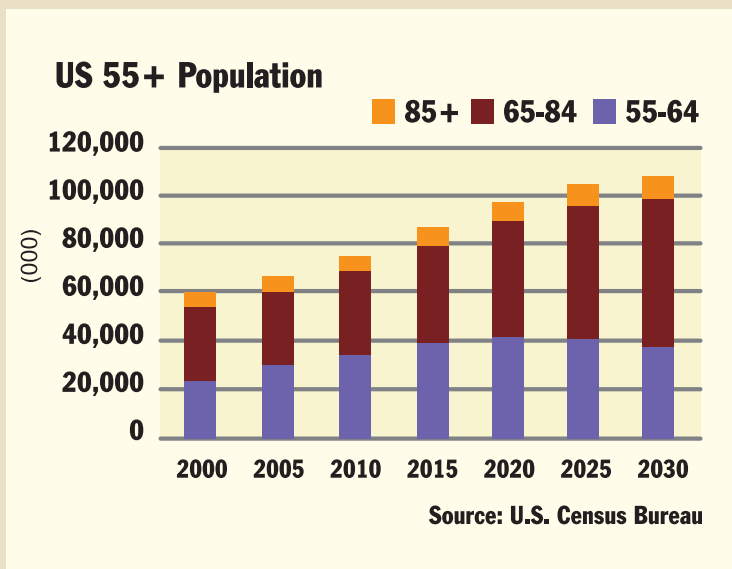
#### TOPS IN TEXAS:

Google the word “retirement” and 233 million hits return, with CNN Money and Forbes as the top two retirement Web sites. Search for the keywords “retire” and “Texas” and Tyler, Texas, rises close to the top. This mid-size community just 90 miles north of Dallas is leading the way in targeting the multi-billion dollar retirement tourism and relocation market. The top 10 reasons to retire in Tyler: low cost of living, warm climate, abundant recreation, educational opportunities, housing options, financial

services, cultural attractions and events, fine dining, convenient shopping and spiritual opportunities. Check out the community’s Web site: [www.retiretyler.com](http://www.retiretyler.com).

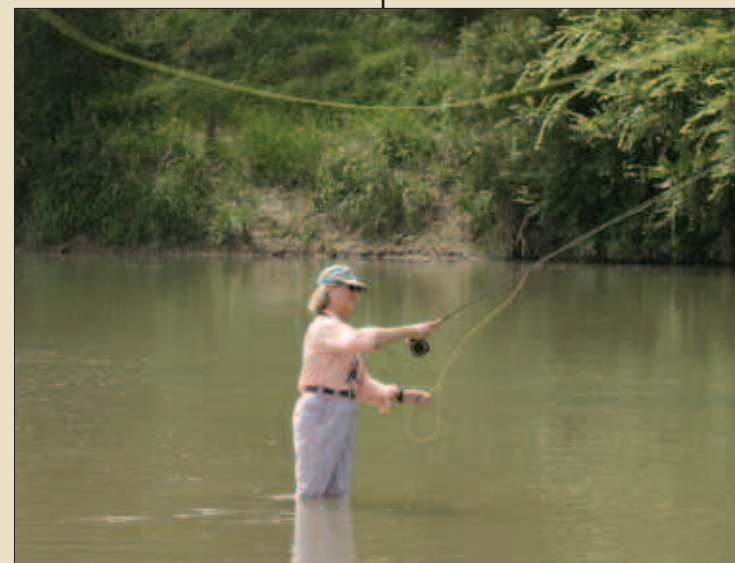
**IT’S CRAZY:** For nearly 100 years, the Crazy Hotel in Mineral Wells, the Gateway to the North Texas Hill Country, has served four strengths of water from its water pavilion. While it can no longer claim to cure hysteria, insomnia, rheumatism, diabetes, gout, Bright’s disease, malaria or high blood pressure, this historic hotel built in 1927 at a cost of \$1 million can claim to provide the most distinctive, luxurious and affordable independent retirement living in Texas. The Crazy Hotel contains more than 200 guest rooms and a spacious lobby, and incorporates the Crazy Water Pavilion, site of the third well dug in Mineral Wells in

*Continued on back*



### ECONOMICS OF RETIREMENT

Traditional economic development focuses on attracting businesses to grow jobs and tax revenues. Recruiting retirees to a community has the same multiplier effect but with a greater economic return. Those over 50 account for 70 percent of tourism spending. Enticing retirees to visit and to stay requires fewer costly inducements than when recruiting new

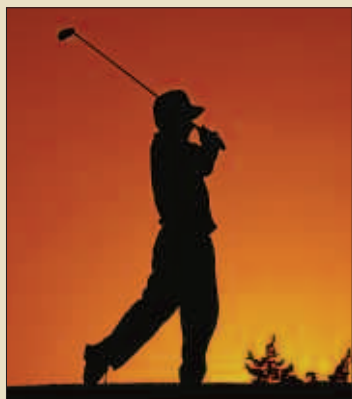


## RALLYING AROUND RURAL TEXAS!

1881. The top floor of the hotel features a glass enclosed ballroom that opens onto a rooftop garden. For more, visit [www.crazywaterhotel.com](http://www.crazywaterhotel.com) or [www.mineralwellstx.com](http://www.mineralwellstx.com).

### LUCKY HORSESHOE:

Founded in 1971 by cousins Norman and Wayne Hurd on 2,700 acres of ranchland west of Austin and north of San Antonio, Horseshoe Bay on Lake LBJ is a world-class residential and resort community, boasting three top-rated Robert Trent Jones golf courses, a hotel, marina and yacht club, and a private airport. The climate, lakes, golf and lifestyle attract retirees from across the country. Visit online at [www.highlandlakes.com/horseshoebay](http://www.highlandlakes.com/horseshoebay).



### HAPPY RETURNS:

Recognizing that every tourist could be a future resident, the small town of Clifton in the Prairies and Lakes region focuses marketing efforts on growing

senior tourism, particularly from the nearby Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. Known as the Norwegian Capital of Texas, bus tours of Clifton stop to explore the Bosque Memorial Museum and Norse Historic District. Clifton celebrates its Norwegian heritage each year with the Norwegian Country Christmas Tour, held the first Saturday of December. Take a virtual tour at [www.clifton.centraltx.com](http://www.clifton.centraltx.com).

## THE POWER OF PEP

One of the strongest voices supporting the Texas Certified Retirement Community Program, the Pineywoods Economic Partnership (PEP) has served twelve counties in East Texas for more than 45 years. PEP, formerly known as the Deep East Texas Development Association, has championed the development of East Texas' natural resources, promoted tourism efforts and supported initiatives to improve transportation throughout the region.

Since 1960, the organization of communities has been instrumental in advancing regional economic development initiatives including a new campaign touting East Texas as a retirement destination. Set to launch in October, the marketing plan was developed in partnership with professional consultants based



on survey research from recently relocated retirees and with input from communities in the region. According to Trent Ashby, executive director of PEP, one key discovery was the role local realtors play as marketing allies. Outdoor advertising, brochures, print materials and a Web site will drive the new brand identity for East Texas tourism.

*For more on the power of partnerships, visit [www.pineywoodsep.org](http://www.pineywoodsep.org).*

## TARGET MARKETING

One of the first rules of marketing is to know your audience:

- Those over 50 today control 70

percent of the nation's wealth, and are a lucrative target for rural tourism and retirement relocation;

- Many migrating seniors return to nature, be it mountains, woods, beach or desert, and consider only those locations where they have vacationed for many years;

- Some return "home" – native Texans account for one-fifth of retirees returning to Texas;
- Others move to be closer to family or care providers; and
- With the Lone Star State's lower cost of living, more retirees relocate here from California and Florida than any other state.

*For help with your community's marketing plans, contact your region's TDA Rural and Agribusiness Development Field Staff member at (877) 428-7848.*

## RECOMMENDED READING:

- "Retirees Boosting States' Rural Economies," Christine Vestal, March 04, 2006, [www.stateline.org](http://www.stateline.org) (search for the keywords "Vestal" and "Retirees")
- "Statewide Marketing Program to Help Towns Attract Older Residents," Bob Moos, May 29, 2006, [www.dallasnews.com](http://www.dallasnews.com) (search for the keywords "Moos" and "Retirees")
- "Retirement Development and Job Creation," Dr. Mark Fagan, October 2005, Jacksonville State University, [www.jsu.edu/depart/sowk/Mark\\_Homepage.html](http://www.jsu.edu/depart/sowk/Mark_Homepage.html).



## Turning Up the Heat

Kick your community's tourism marketing up a notch with the latest in the series of Texas Yes! Bootstrap Marketing Workshops. With a smorgasbord of topics including event planning, budgeting and sponsorships, minimizing risk, measuring and investing returns, and of course networking opportunities, this series has all the ingredients to turn up the heat on your community's tourism success. Whether you're a seasoned pro or a rookie, attend one day-long session or both!

**New Braunfels: Oct. 23-24**

*For more details go to [www.texasyes.org](http://www.texasyes.org).*



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