

[back to article](#)



Printed on page C7

where to retire magazine

Lakeland's Location Brings Honors As a Good Place for Retirees

Housing, geography, amenities cited as positive aspects.

*By MYCAH PLEASANT
LEDGER CORRESPONDENT*

Published: Wednesday, August 5, 2009 at 6:44 p.m.

LAKELAND | Lakeland has once again been honored as one of the best places to retire, this time in the September/October edition of Where to Retire magazine.

Cities are picked by the magazine based on factors of housing options, geographic area, and amenities. The bimonthly magazine features four to five cities in each issue.

Lakeland was first listed by the magazine as a great place to retire in 2002.

According to the publication, which has a circulation of about 220,000, Lakeland's location, glistening lakes, Frank Lloyd Wright architecture, and annual Sun 'n Fun Fly-In event separate it from other cities.

Kathleen Munson, president of the Lakeland Area Chamber of Commerce, takes great pride in the designation.

"Any time we receive positive recognition it makes us proud," she said.

Munson also thinks that the reasonable price of living in the area is attracting retirees.

The magazine lists the cost of living in Lakeland as below average.

Lakeland Mayor Buddy Fletcher sees Lakeland as a family community.

"We have recreation for all ages," he said. "You can be outside almost every day of the year."

Both Fletcher and Munson cite excellent health care as another reason retirees are considering Lakeland.

"We're becoming the Medical Mecca of the Southeast," said Munson.

Fletcher and Munson point to the high-tech industry and economic development of the area for recent growth.

"We've really keyed in on high-tech jobs," said Fletcher.

Being situated between Tampa and Orlando is also a big draw.

"You got sun and you got sand all within an hour's drive," Fletcher said.

According to the Lakeland Economical Development Council, nearly 28,000 retirement-age, or 55 and over, adults call Lakeland home.

Janeen Hauer, property manager for the retirement community Angler's Cove in Lakeland, agrees with Fletcher and Munson.

"It's a beautiful city," she said. "It's got great lakes and parks and a great hospital."

Compared to other cities in the area, she said, Lakeland is more user-friendly.

"Lakeland is just easier to get around in," she said.

Seventy-year-old Redmond Condon, a retiree from the Boston area and the president of the homeowners association for the FoxWood Lake Estates retirement community in Lakeland, agrees.

"It's a very convenient city," he said.

Condon, who has lived in Lakeland for 10 years, looked at other places when choosing a retirement location, but none struck him like Lakeland did.

"I looked in South Carolina, but there you either lived in the boonies or the city," he said. "Lakeland is a very central location."

Like many other retirees, Condon also loves the weather.

Hauer said that the majority of the 340 homes at Anglers Cove are owned by snowbirds from places like Canada and Michigan.

Winter Haven was named a top retirement location in a 2006 issue of the

magazine.

This story appeared in print on page C7
