

# The Extent Friendship has a Role in Retiree Recruitment and Retention in South Carolina: Survey Results

**Kenneth Backman and Melissa Hawkins**

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## **About the Authors**

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# The Extent Friendship has a Role in Retiree Recruitment and Retention in South Carolina: Survey Results

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recent retirees to South Carolina were asked their opinions related to their move to South Carolina, and their friendships in their previous community and their new community. Retirees were interviewed in-depth initially to identify relevance of friendship's influence on move decisions.

- In-depth interviews provided a mixed response as to a retiree's satisfaction with friendships in their new communities.
- The mail survey respondents' average age was 61, most were married (65.7 percent), most had lived at their present address less than three years (76.9 percent), they appeared to be of two primary household income levels—over \$60,000 per year (28.6 percent) and between \$15,000 and \$49,999 (25.2 percent).
- The primary reason for moving to the state was friends and relatives (63 percent).
- The primary reason for leaving the previous residence was lack of family (21 percent).
- Most of the respondents moved to South Carolina from Florida (14.8 percent), North Carolina (11.8 percent), New York (5.3 percent), Georgia (3.6 percent) and Connecticut (2.4 percent).
- Though most respondents are fairly satisfied with their decision to move, results suggest that measures on all dimensions of friendship the respondents have low scores.

- It appears that most in-migrant retirees volunteer to some extent in their new community, but those who are least satisfied tend to volunteer less.
- Of the respondents who did not volunteer in their new community, the primary reasons were personal schedules too full (42.5 percent) and health problems (28.1 percent).
- Given respondent feelings toward their new community, most feel they would be reluctant to leave (56.5 percent).

## II. METHODOLOGY

Recent in-migrant retirees were randomly selected from a list of recent in-migrant retirees purchased from a mailing list company to participate in the study. A random sample was extracted from the population using every 10th person.

The survey instrument was pilot tested with retirees in various areas of the state prior to administration. Using the comments from the pilot test, the instrument was modified to provide clearer instructions to the questions.

A survey package containing the self-administered survey instrument and a pre-paid self-addressed envelope was mailed to the sample of 946. Two weeks following the initial mail-out, a reminder postcard was mailed. Following this, a second survey package was mailed to the sample.

The final sample of 169 represented a 25 percent response rate for the survey after accounting for nondeliverables and persons who were not retirees.

### **III. PERSONAL INTERVIEWS WITH RETIREES**

As an initial phase in this project retirees were identified in South Carolina and asked if they would agree to be interviewed. Five (5) couples were interviewed at length.

Assistants first interviewed three couples to assess the clarity and validity of the survey instrument for the study. One couple, Ed and Marilyn Jones, lived in a gated retirement community which bordered a large lake, had two golf courses, and was in close proximity to mountain amenities and small metropolitan areas. Another attraction of “Heavenly Hills” was the proximity of a university. The other two couples, Roger and Ellen White and John and Mary King, lived in a retirement community as well. “Summer Landing” was on a lake and included several golf courses. It was located in a more rural area than Heavenly Hills, but was still only an hour and a half away from a small city which offered medical facilities and large shopping plazas.

Interviews with each couple took place in their homes, sitting around a kitchen table, or at the Jones’, on sofas in their living room. All interviews lasted about one and a half hours. On each visit, Hawkins explained that the Strom Thurmond Institute was administering a study to determine why people retired to South Carolina and what impacts their move had on the state. They were also told that the study included some questions about their socialization. In the beginning of each interview, couples were asked to complete the survey, examining it for clarity and thoroughness. After surveys were completed, subjects were asked if they had any questions or concerns about the instrument. Hawkins took notes based on their suggestions and assured them their comments would assist in refining the survey.

Following this process, conversations began with Hawkins using the following questions and/or statements to initiate discussion:

- \* Talk about why you moved here. How is this community different from your previous community?
- \* Tell me about your friendships here. How are they developed?
- \* What about your old friends? Do you still keep in touch? Do they visit or ever consider moving here?
- \* (Let’s talk about your old friends.) Where are they? Is it difficult being away from them? How about your family? Where are they?
- \* Are social opportunities more available here than in your previous community? Explain.
- \* How does your community involvement here differ from past community involvement?

## **DISCUSSIONS:**

### **Ed and Marilyn Jones of Heavenly Hills:**

The marriage of Ed and Marilyn Jones was the second marriage for both. Ed was widowed and Marilyn was divorced. He was age 69 and she was age 61 at the time of the interview. They met in Miami, Florida after Ed's wife had passed away from a long illness. Ed had moved to Miami to retire with his first wife, and Marilyn had moved there in the 1980s to work.

Miami, according to Ed and Marilyn, was too crime-laden and crowded, and increasing tensions between racial groups were disturbing. The couple moved to Heavenly Hills after a lengthy search of retirement destinations. They searched primarily in the Southeast, with a focus on coastal and lake communities. They chose Heavenly Hills after renting there for one month and researching the area by receiving the area's local newspaper for three months. They wanted to insure that the area had a low rate of crime. The other factors leading to their destination choice were the lake for Ed's sailing, the mountains for Marilyn's hiking, the amenities of the university, and the low cost of living. At the time of the interview, they had been living in Heavenly Hills for four years.

Both Ed and Marilyn were satisfied with the friendships they formed in their four years of living in the community. They felt the community was a social setting in which residents were continually organizing themselves in interest groups. They attributed the extremely social inclination of the community to its high percentages of people who were in their second marriages and of those who were widowed. They seemed to think most Heavenly Hills residents were starting over, leaving their past lives behind them. Generally, both Ed and Marilyn felt they were more social than they had ever been in their lives.

Both Ed and Marilyn considered the people in their community friends and indicated very little contact with individuals with whom they had formerly been friends. They indicated that their present attitudes about friendships were in

line with how they have always felt, given their active and migratory lifestyles. Some friends and family who did not live in the area were communicated with on a regular basis via mail, phone or e-mail. These people were scattered all over the country.

In their four years of living in Heavenly Hills, Ed and Marilyn had several family members and one couple who were friends, visit them. Ed's son and daughter-in-law so enjoyed the area that they are trying to move to it. Both the son and daughter-in-law are in medical school and will attempt to find jobs at the local hospital, Ed reported. No other friends or family members indicated that they would like to move to the area.

### **Roger and Ellen White of Summer Landing:**

Roger and Ellen White were from Michigan, had never been married to anyone but one another, and had raised a family together in Michigan. Roger was age 65 and Ellen was age 69 at the time of the interview. They moved to Summer Landing after a year-long search of retirement destinations in the Southeast, two and one-half years prior to the interview. They choose Summer Landing because of its similarity in appearance to their previous community in Michigan and its pleasant climate. It also offered the golf amenities that Roger desired.

The Whites joked that the only differences between Summer Landing and their previous home were the more pleasing weather in Summer Landing and the joy of not working. Both of the Whites felt that they had many friends in the community. They attributed this to their golfing and participation in church and volunteer activities. The Whites seemed very compatible with one another and appeared to do most of their activities as a couple. Therefore, when they discussed their friendships, it seemed that they made friends together, perhaps with other couples with whom they attended church, golfed, and volunteered.

They both enjoyed talking to old friends from Michigan, especially Ellen. She talked to

former friends about twice a month and also corresponded by mail. The Whites said that they had an open invitation policy with old friends and family members and were interested in convincing some of their old friends to move to Summer Landing. However, the Whites did not think anyone they knew would move South because of family and work-related ties in Michigan. Their two children were in the mid-west and were not interested in moving. Ellen commented that she regretted not seeing her grandchild more frequently.

Roger felt that he was more active in Summer Landing than he had been previously. Logically, since he no longer had to work, he had more time to participate in leisure activities. He expressed great satisfaction with his life situation. Ellen felt that she too was very active but said that she had always been active since she had never worked outside of the home. She was very happy with her life as well, and expressed that having Roger volunteer with her made her very happy.

The Whites appeared to be very content people. They expressed nothing but happiness with their decision to move to Summer Landing, missing only family members and church friends from Michigan. Both planned on living the remainder of their lives in the community.

#### **John and Mary King of Summer Landing:**

The marriage of John and Mary King was the second for both, though they had been married to one another for over twenty years. John was age 66 and Mary was age 52. They had moved to Summer Landing three years prior to the interview. It was their second retirement move and they said it would not be their final one. They had previously lived in Tennessee for a year and a half but found the winters to be too cold. They chose Summer Landing because they had been searching for a warmer climate and a quiet community. They had looked for about six months in South Carolina, choosing Summer Landing over communities they looked at on the coast, because Summer Landing was just being built,

was in a rural area, and appeared to have virtually no traffic.

The Kings expressed discontent with their community. Neither felt they had many friends or even knew their neighbors' names. Mary was especially dissatisfied because she felt she had nothing in common with her peers in the community. Her hobbies were primarily indoor activities such as reading and working on the computer. She felt as if she did not belong because, in her opinion, most everyone else wanted to golf, fish or go boating.

Though John was active in golfing and exercising at the activity center, he did not feel connected with others either. The two seemed generally unhappy. Strangely, however, both volunteered quite actively at a nearby school and seemed to genuinely care about helping children.

The Kings also confided that they felt everyone else in the community had "come there to die." By this statement, they explained that though people were active, they planned to live out their lives in Summer Landing. It seemed that the Kings were not interested in making such a decision, choosing rather to let life unfold as it may. John had been a salesman before retirement, so the Kings were accustomed to moving. They seemed to enjoy their migrant lifestyle and were thinking that a community focused on retirement might not be what they desired. Rather, they expressed interest in moving to a "regular" neighborhood, where most all ages were represented.

The Kings said that they rarely spoke with friends or family from other places. Neither had many family members living, but they considered Tennessee "home" because they had both grown up there. They said that they were not sure when or where they would move next but thought it might be within five years. The Kings did not seem to be typical amenity-seeking retirees. Compared to the other couples interviewed and findings in the literature, they did not appear to adopt the same leisure-seeking attitude and desire for socialization with other such retired individuals.

Following the same process, an additional

two couples were interviewed to further assess the clarity and validity of the survey instrument. Both couples were retired and lived in the same gated retirement community. "Keowee Key" was set on a large lake, had an 18 hole golf course and was set in the rural foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. Within an hour's drive from the community, residents have access to numerous small cities offering medical facilities, numerous outdoor recreation opportunities and large shopping plazas. The interview with the Ehmanns was very thorough and lasted more than two hours, while the interview with the Aspergers was roughly one hour.

### **Marilou and Curtis Ehmann of Keowee Key:**

Marilou and Curtis had been married for 48 years and had been retired since 1987. At the time of the interview, he was 69 and she was 67. They met, raised their family and spent most of their lives in Minnesota. Immediately after retirement, they moved to a retirement community in Palatine, Illinois.

While they both enjoyed the other members of the community in Illinois, they were displeased with its setting. Curtis did not enjoy living so close to the city of Chicago and was finding it hard to go through the long winters of the Midwest. Marilou was also displeased with the climate in Illinois. Further, she felt that taxes were too high and that there weren't enough opportunities for outdoor recreation.

The Ehmanns spent almost a full year looking for a warmer place to spend their retirement. Though they initially wanted to move to Florida, they found that property prices were lower in the Carolinas. They were further encouraged to move to South Carolina because many of the retirement communities were situated far from "big city congestion." After scouting out many destinations, they both decided that they preferred Keowee Key.

Curtis was most impressed by Keowee Key, for some of its residents had formed a model train club. Curtis was a collector of train sets and has since become a member of a model train club. Additionally, he has been

instrumental in forming fund-raisers, for local charities, with his fellow train enthusiasts. Marilou is very active in a local church group and spends much of her time volunteering at the church. The majority of her friendships at Keowee Key have been formed at church functions. She also enjoys playing golf and plays once a week, all year round, with members of her church. Curtis does not enjoy playing golf anymore, but often rides along in the cart to enjoy the outdoors.

While both of the Ehmanns have formed a small circle of friends at Keowee Key, they consider their friends from the Midwest to be their "true friends." They spend much of their time visiting friends and family in either Colorado, New York, Minnesota or Wisconsin. Their children, grandchildren and some of their friends in the Midwest have all visited Keowee Key.

Outside of the model train club and church, neither of the Ehmanns have met any of their other fellow residents. They both said that they would like to meet their neighbors, but do not feel a need to start new relationships. Even though they are both content with their surroundings, they do not plan on spending the rest of their lives in South Carolina. They thoroughly enjoy their surroundings at Keowee Key, but it does not feel like home to them.

### **John and Mary Asperger of Keowee Key:**

John and Mary Asperger met in New York and had been married for 12 years. John was 64 and Mary was 55 at the time of the interview. John's first wife passed away in 1983, and Mary had been divorced since 1978. They originally moved to South Carolina shortly after being married. John's work brought them to Columbia in 1986. Neither one of them was very happy in New York and each was more than happy to move. John retired in 1994 and they moved to Keowee Key.

Both John and Mary chose Keowee Key because of the surrounding natural beauty. Neither one of them had ever lived in a small city or rural setting. They had made some friends in the Columbia area and felt that

Keowee Key would afford them the ability, to both get away and be near their acquaintances. Even though Columbia is only a couple hours drive away, they have had little contact with their friends in Columbia.

The Aspergers were both disappointed with the social life at Keowee Key. They both mentioned that they had attempted to make new friends, but were unable to make any. They further mentioned that as new residents, nobody truly welcomed them. They felt as if people were going out of their way to avoid them. John and Mary play golf and tennis and spend much of their time on the course or at the courts. They had met other couples playing tennis, but felt as if they were unwanted.

John and Mary both have family spread out throughout the United States. Their best friends are all in New York, but they have had little contact with them since moving to South Carolina. Neither one of them does any volunteer work and both were unaware of any opportunities. They did not plan on pursuing opportunities as they were hoping to move to a new community. John has some family in Colorado, and they are hoping to move there within the next year. They do not think they will move to another gated community. Though they love the lake and the surrounding area, they want to lead a more social lifestyle and hope to find it in Colorado.

#### IV. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RETIREES

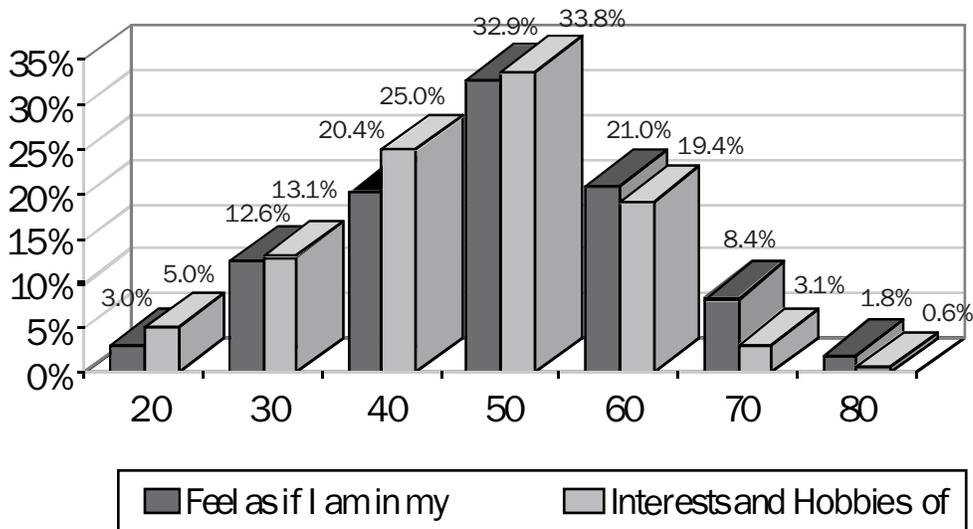
##### Age

The mean and median age of the sample was 61.

Although respondents reported a chronological age of 61, the data below shows that the majority of the population feels, on average, 10 years younger. Further, these

individuals also report that their activities and interests are those of individuals younger than themselves. These findings suggest that this group of individuals is healthy, active and feels younger than their age suggests.

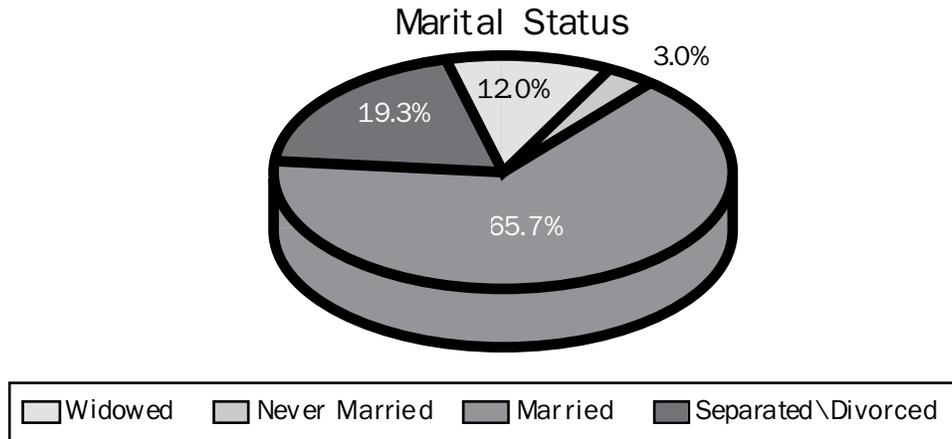
Comparison of Felt Age and Interests



### Marital Status

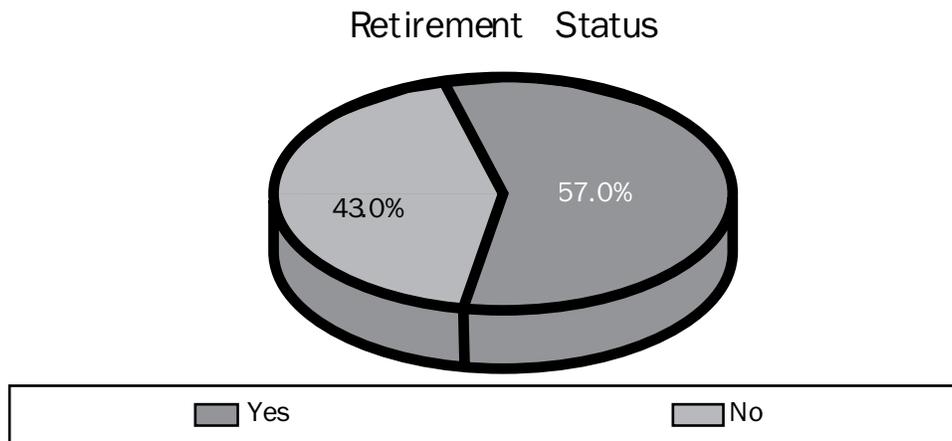
The majority of this population is still married. However, approximately 34 percent of the population is “single” (separated\divorced, widowed or never married). This presents an

opportunity for organizations to provide opportunities for socialization and integration for this single market.



### Retirement Status

New movers in this study are primarily retired. This is reflected in the growth of South Carolina’s economy.

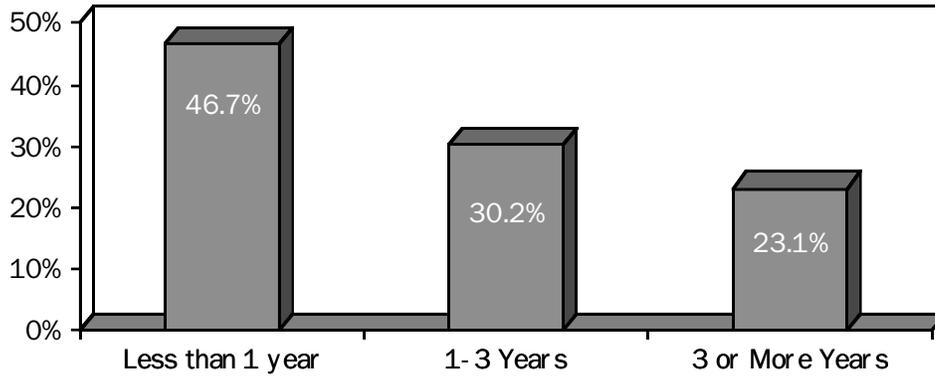


### Length of Time at Present Address

It is not surprising that 76.9 percent of this group have lived at their present address less

than three years. This suggests that they are very new to the area.

Length of Time at Present Address

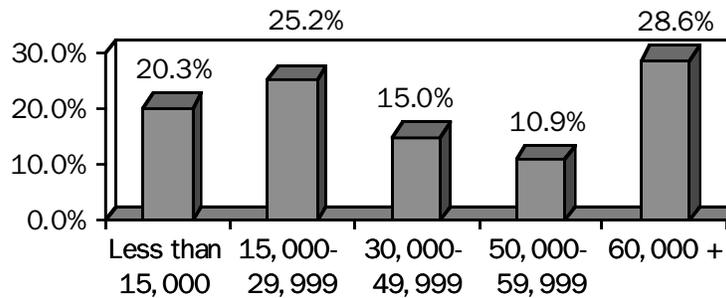


### Income

The data in the graph below shows two primary household income groups, those with incomes less than \$30,000 (45.5 percent)

and those with incomes above \$30,000 (54.5 percent).

Income Level



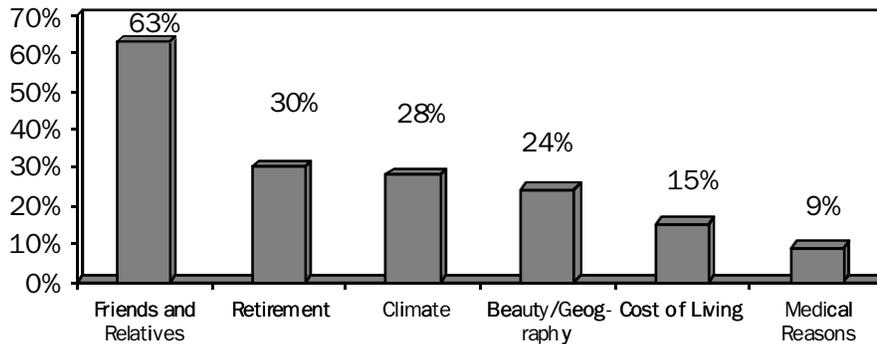
## V. REASONS FOR MOVING TO SOUTH CAROLINA

### Pull Factors

The factor that pulled retirees most to South Carolina before the move was “having family and friends in the area” (63 percent). The second most important reason was due to their retirement from the workforce (30 percent). The factors following these that are most important

are the state’s “climate” (28 percent) and the beauty/geography of the region (24 percent). Then finally, they moved to the state for the “cost of living” (15 percent) and medical reasons (9 percent).

Reasons for Moving to South Carolina



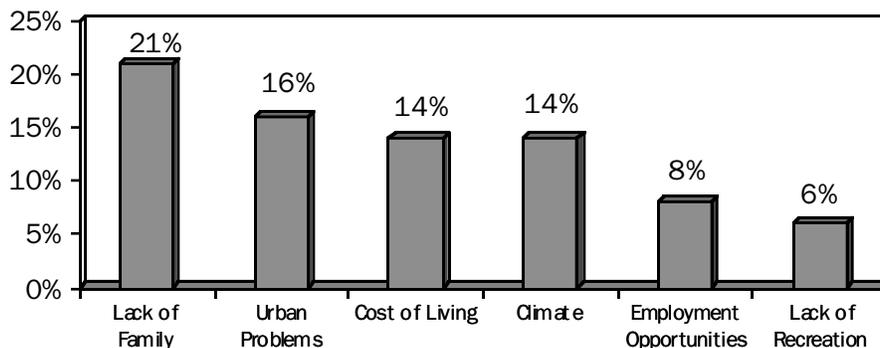
### Push Factors

The factor that pushed the retirees most from their previous place of residence was “few or no family residing in the area” (21 percent), “problems of urban areas” (16 percent), “cost of living” (14 percent), and “previous climate was not to their liking” (14 percent). Finally, the reasons for leaving were lack of employment

opportunities (8 percent) and lack of recreation (6 percent).

Retirees moving to South Carolina tended to arrive between the months of May to September (55.8 percent), and 32.5 percent moved in the last two years.

Reasons for Leaving Previous Address

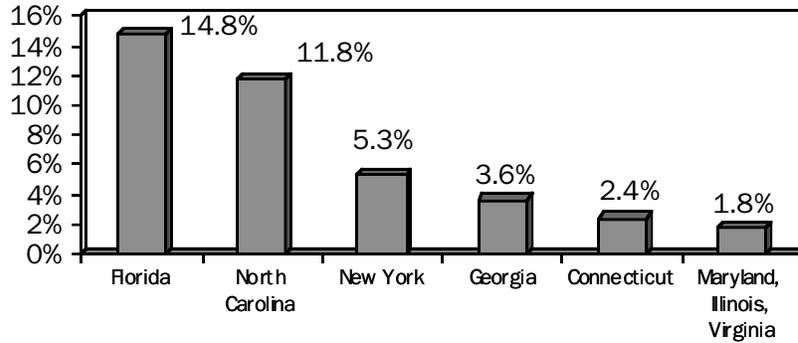


### State of Previous Residence

The largest percent of retirees moved to South Carolina from Florida (14.8 percent), followed by North Carolina (11.8 percent) and New York (5.3 percent). The next group of

movers was from Georgia (3.6 percent), Connecticut (2.4 percent), Maryland (1.8 percent), Illinois (1.8 percent, and Virginia (1.8 percent).

State of Previous Residence



## VI. EXTENT AND STRENGTH OF FRIENDSHIP

Friendship was defined in this study as “a relationship involving voluntary or unconstrained interaction in which the participants respond to one another personally. . .as unique individuals rather than as packages of discrete attributes or mere role occupants” (Wright, 1984, p. 119). This definition of friendship was operationalized in the survey using a modified version of Wright’s Acquaintance Description Form (ADF-F2). It was chosen due to its wide use and proven reliability and validity in studying personal relationships such as friendship (Wright, 1991).

The ADF-F2 is composed of six subscales: measures of relationship strength (voluntary interdependence and person-qua-person); measures of interpersonal rewards (stimulation value and ego support value); a measure of response bias (general favorability); and relationship differentiation scale (permanence) (Wright, 1991).

The results of the current study of retiree immigrants suggests that for all dimensions of the relationship scale (ADF-F2) the respondents had relatively weak scores.

**Table 1**

<b>Acquaintance Description Form (ADF-F2) Scores for Retirees</b>			
	Mean Score*	Minimum	Maximum
Voluntary Interdependence	8.84	3.00	15.00
Person-qua-Person	4.34	2.00	10.00
Stimulation Value	5.11	2.00	10.00
Ego Support Value	2.59	1.00	5.00
General Favorability	3.31	2.00	10.00
Permanence	7.86	2.00	10.00

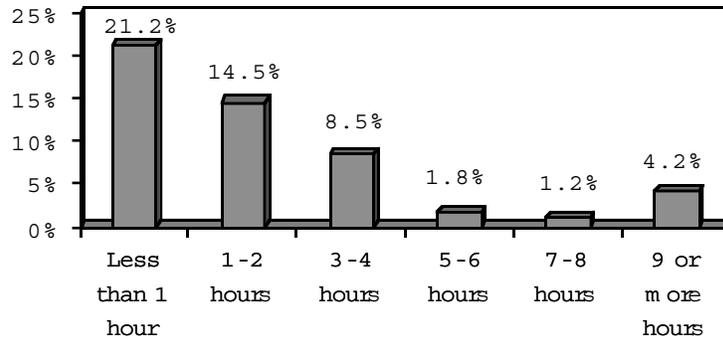
\*The higher or closer the score is to maximum the higher the individual rates on that particular dimension of friendship.

Sources: Wright, P.H. (1984). “Self-referent motivation and the intrinsic quality of friendship.” *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 1, 115-130.

Wright, P.H. (1991). “The Acquaintance Description Form: What it is and how to use it.” Unpublished manuscript, The University of North Dakota.

## VII. RETIREE VOLUNTEERING

Hours a Week Spent Volunteering



Few retiree movers tend to spend less than one hour a week in volunteer activities. A second group of new retiree movers spends between one and two hours a week in volunteer

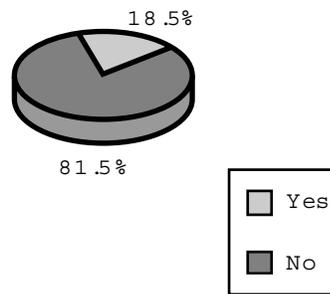
activities. The delivery of services in many communities depends on the volunteer hours of these new retiree movers.

### Length of Time A Volunteer

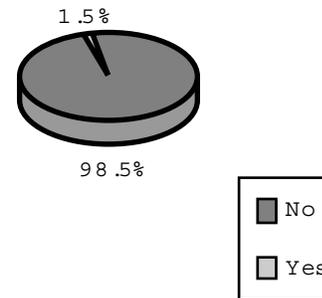
The average volunteer in this study has been a volunteer for 6.85 years. In general they learned about volunteer opportunities from their

participation in an organization or group or from friends.

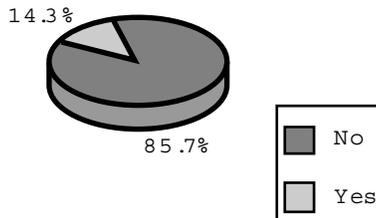
Sought Out Information Myself



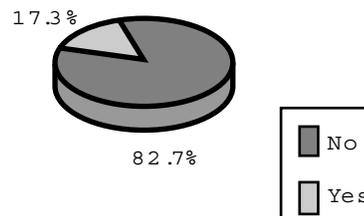
Saw An Advertisement



Through Participation in an Organization Group



From a Friend



## **Not Volunteering**

Approximately 48.5 percent of this sample of new retiree movers do not volunteer in their new community. The table below shows the percentage of individuals indicating that the following reasons describe why they have not been an active volunteer. The most cited reason

for not volunteering was the full personal schedules of individuals. The second constraint perceived by this sample of new movers was health problems. In contrast, constraints related to liability, and lack of time and transportation were the least important to new movers.

**Table 2**

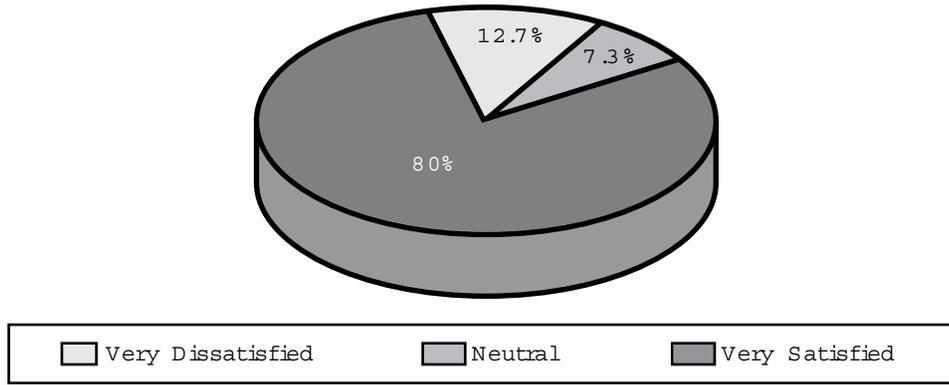
<b>Reasons for Not Volunteering</b>		
	%	Rank
Personal schedule too full	42.5	1
Health problems, physically unable	28.1	2
No one I know personally asked me	21.2	3
No organization contacted me and asked me to volunteer	21.1	4
May be unable to honor the volunteer commitment	21.1	4
No interest	21.1	4
My age	20.7	7
Don't know how to become involved	8.8	8
Have done enough volunteer work	8.0	9
Concern about volunteer legal liability	7.1	10
My time is too valuable	6.2	11
Don't have transportation	5.4	12

**VIII. COMMUNITY SATISFACTION OF RETIREES**

Most new movers feel satisfied with their community (mean=7.42, 1=very dissatisfied, 10=very satisfied). The data below shows that

only a small percentage of the sample are not satisfied with their present community.

Overall Satisfaction With Present Community



**Feelings About the Community**

The data in Table 3 shows that the residents truly enjoy being in their community, are satisfied with their decision to move to this community, really care about their community, found it to be what they had expected, are

satisfied with the variety of things to do in the community, and feel that this community is the best place for them to live. New movers are satisfied with their new communities and feel good about living in them.

**Table 3**

<b>Feelings About the Community</b>		Mean
1.	This community is exactly what I expected.	2.07*
2.	Living in this community has not worked out as well as I thought it would.	3.88
3.	I am satisfied with my decision to move to this community.	1.86
4.	Sometimes I have mixed feelings about staying in this community.	3.55
5.	I have truly enjoyed being in this community.	1.96
6.	This community is the best place for me to live.	2.36
7.	I do not "fit in" living in this community.	4.03
8.	I really care about this community.	2.00
9.	I am very satisfied with the variety of things to do in this community.	2.22

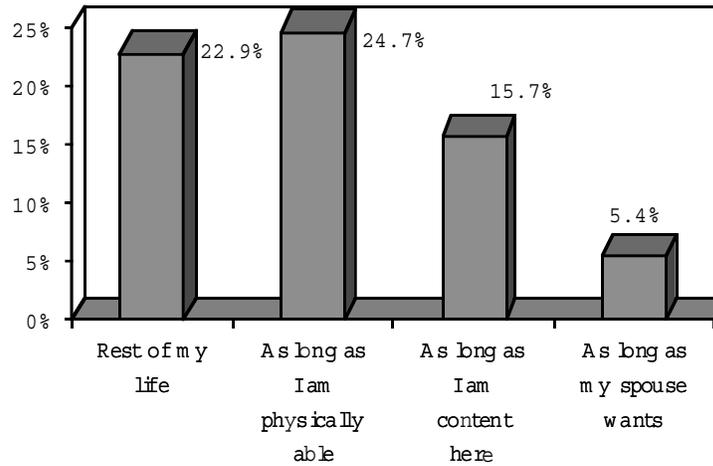
\*1= strongly agree      5=strongly disagree

### Intention to Live in This Community

The majority of residents intend to live in their present community for the rest of their lives or at least as long as they are able physically. Residents have found communities in

which they live to be their residences for the future. They are happy and satisfied with their new communities.

How Long Do You Intend to Live in this Community?

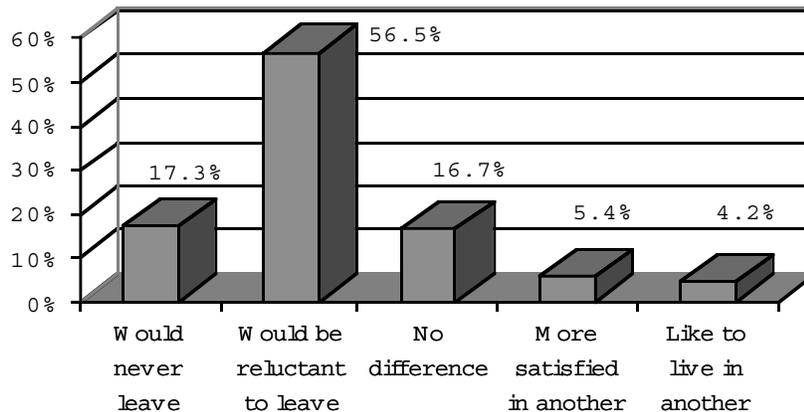


### Like Living in This Community

Further support for residents' satisfaction with their present community can be drawn from the data below. The majority of residents indicated that they would be reluctant to leave their present community if they had to leave.

Residents are attached to their new communities. This finding is noteworthy because most residents have lived in their new community three years or less.

How Well Do You Like Living In This Community?



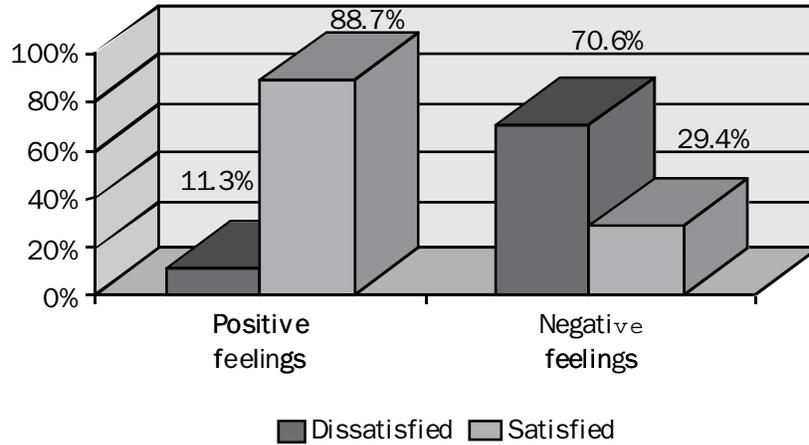
### General Feelings About the Community

Residents reporting positive feelings about their community feel very satisfied with their present community. It is surprising to note the 11.3 percent of individuals, despite reporting positive feelings about the community, are

dissatisfied living in that community.

Those reporting negative feelings about the community generally are dissatisfied with the community.

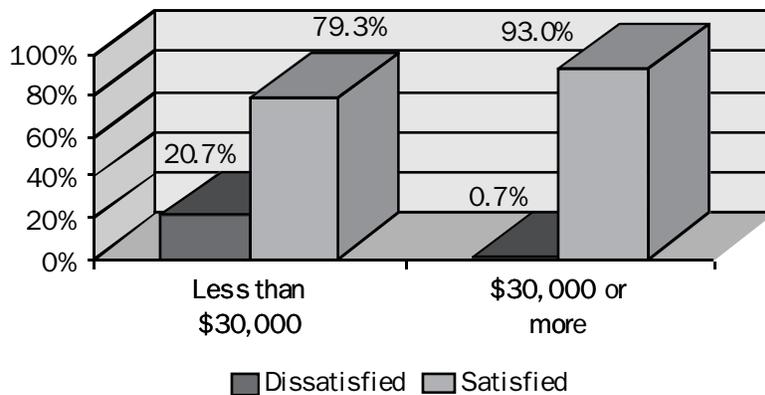
Overall Feelings About Present Community



Examining the income level of new movers reveals that regardless of income, the majority feel good about their community. However, the general good feelings reported by lower income groups (less than \$30,000) were lower than

those reported by higher income groups. Higher income groups reported lower feelings of dissatisfaction than did those with lower levels of income.

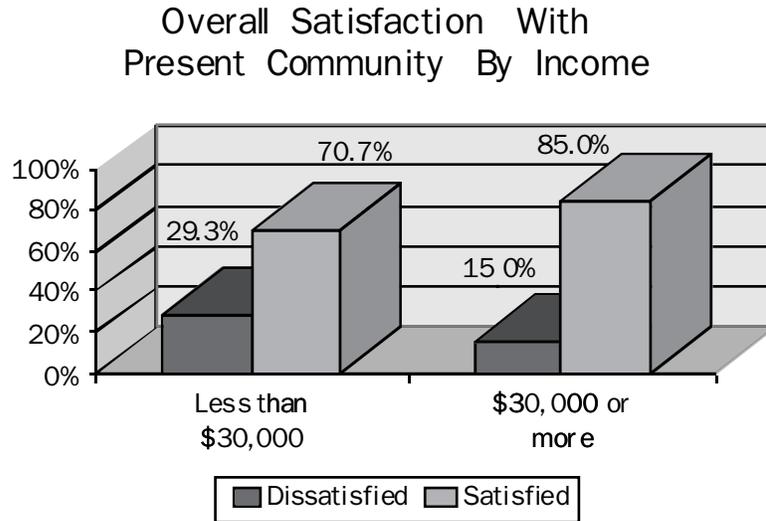
Overall Feelings About Present Community By Income



### Satisfied With Present Community

Few movers' overall satisfaction with their present community may be associated with level of income. The data below shows that those

reporting incomes of \$30,000 or more are more satisfied with their community than those reporting lower incomes.



Individuals who report that they are satisfied with their community report good feelings about their community (95.7 percent). Only 4.3% percent of those who are satisfied with

their community reported not feeling good about their present community.

### First Move and Satisfaction

New movers' retirement status does not have an impact on residents' level of satisfaction with their present community. The majority of those satisfied and dissatisfied with their community are retired.

Those who are first time movers report being more satisfied with their present community than those reporting more than one move (Table 4).

**Table 4**

<b>First Move by Satisfaction</b>		
First Move	Satisfaction	
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Yes	34.6%	38.5%
No	8.4%	23.1%

**Previous Friendship and Community Satisfaction**

Regardless of level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the community, the majority

of new movers did not have friends living in the community prior to their move.

**Reason for Move to South Carolina**

Level of satisfaction with residents' new community does not appear to be related to the top three reasons which led movers to leave their previous community. Both those satisfied

and those dissatisfied report the following as the top reasons for their move: (1) few or no family in the area; (2) urban problems; (3) climate; (4) cost of living and (5) property tax rate.

**Number of Friends Who've Moved to South Carolina**

Although the number of new friends moving to the state is low, those reporting more dissatisfaction with their community reported fewer friends moving than did those who are more satisfied.

New movers who report higher levels of satisfaction chat with their neighbors more often than those who are dissatisfied with their community.

**Like the Community**

The data in the table below shows that those residents satisfied with their community are

more reluctant to leave than those currently dissatisfied with the community (Table 5).

**Table 5**

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**How Well Do You Like Living In This Community**

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Item	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Would never leave	18.1%	12.1%
Would move if have to	66.9%	21.2%
Makes no difference	12.6%	15.2%
Probably be more satisfied elsewhere	2.4%	21.2%

New movers who are satisfied with living in their present community intend to live in that community for the rest of their life (31.5

percent). Those reporting dissatisfaction don't know how much longer they will remain (36.4 percent).

**Health and Community Satisfaction**

Individuals reporting satisfaction with their community feel healthier (56.7 percent) than those dissatisfied with their community (48.5 percent). While 12.1 percent of those

dissatisfied with their present community report not feeling very healthy, only 9.4 percent of those satisfied with their community report the same.

## **IX. CONCLUSIONS**

The current study of in-migrant retirees suggests that friendships prior to their decision to move is an important factor in their final selection of a new community. Caution must be used in acceptance of the validity of this concept, though, due to the small sample size and the limitation of the study to South Carolina. No generalizations should be made without further study in other locations.

A second issue of importance is the inference that the "friendship" factor has for community economic developers who are actively recruiting retirees, that being the actual economic value of friendship. The suggestion that could be inferred from the current study is that rather than spend scarce resources on promotion of the area to retirees, some of these resources should

be used to create ways to integrate the in-migrant retirees into their new communities and reduce any conflict between longtime residents and these "newcomers." Through this intervention process new and strong "friendships" could result which would be positively portrayed to other "friends" of the in-migrant retiree group who are looking to relocate. This point though is only conjecture at this time. Only through further study can any true cause and effect relationship be determined. Also, only in further study can the true economic impact of such an economic development strategy be assessed.