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# Business

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## Some retiring boomers seek urban lifestyle

### Experts say offering choices more important than ever

BY PETER HULL  
THE ISLAND PACKET

Tired of long commutes and urban sprawl, baby boomers increasingly are drawn to towns and cities nationwide, experts say, turning their backs on gated communities and making a different lifestyle choice — mixed-use urban centers.

Downtown living is hip. "It's not appropriate to think of (baby boomers) as a group being put out to pasture," said Tim Keane, former director of planning for the city of Charleston and now a principal at urban planners Keane & Co. "We need to build places this variety of people can continue to participate in actively." Different groups are developing

within the boomers generation, experts say. There are those who put a high price on values and principles and those who want to show, or at least give the appearance, that they've had a successful life through their home, possessions and surroundings. And then there's what experts describe as the hardest group to accommodate — those who follow the mind, body and spirit doctrine.

"It makes it very difficult to build for these people," Keane said. Keane spoke Thursday at the sixth annual Carolinas Active

Retirement Association conference on Hilton Head Island. Local and national experts are meeting to discuss retirement trends, urban planning and marketing techniques, and how communities seeking to attract retirees will benefit from initiatives aimed specifically at that demographic.

The conference continues today at the Hilton Oceanfront Resort.

The aging population has varying ideas for its future, Keane said. Boomers want to start a new business, launch a new product or start a Web site, and they have the

### Today at the conference

- 9:15 - 10:15 a.m. — How the "age wave" is affecting our economy: A senior economist with Wachovia Bank in Charlotte will discuss the economic impact of baby boomers.
- 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

money to get them there.

In other words, they want choices, he said, and that applies to how they live. From waterfront parks to on-street dining and shopping, many boomers want to live

— Marketing communities: A hands-on approach: Experts look ways of attracting retirees.

• 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. — The Del Webb experience: Del Webb executives discuss the active adult community's success.

and play, even work, in the same urban setting.

"It's another lifestyle choice that's different from a Sun City," Keane said.

Please see RETIRING, Page 4C

## Retiring

Continued from Page 4C

Residents of Sun City Hilton Head, like their fellow residents in active adult communities across the country, flocked to age-restricted developments after Del Webb, developer of the Sun City brand, opened its first community in Arizona in 1960.

The 4,300-acre Sun City Hilton Head opened nearly 10 years ago. In that time, more than 4,000 homes have been sold to adults from all over the country — mostly 55 years old and up — who were in search of a retirement community where softball and the chess club are just a short golf cart ride away.

A survey last year by Del Webb on the impact the estimated 78 million baby boomers — those born between 1946

and 1964 — will have on the retirement industry, found one in four younger boomers, ages 40 to 45 years old today, will consider buying a home in an age-restricted active adult community at retirement.

That leaves three-quarters who are looking for a different experience.

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— Tim Keane, Keane & Co. principal