

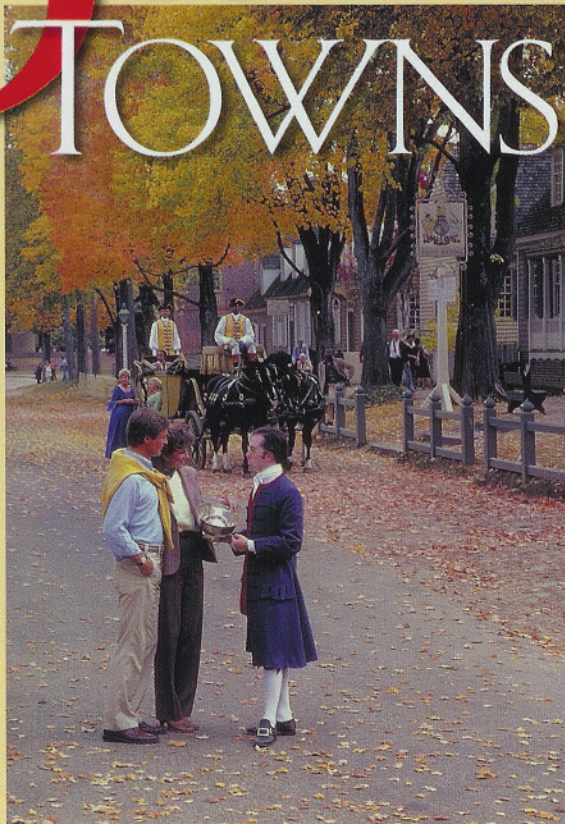
# 8 GREAT LOW-TAX TOWNS

In the working years, taxes are not usually a driving factor in choosing where to live. A job takes us to one city or another, and we choose a neighborhood for its amenities and proximity to schools and work. Whatever the taxes are — income tax, sales tax, property tax — we pay them, with a groan now and then but a shrug that they're simply the price of our lifestyle.

With the approach of retirement comes a greater scrutiny of where our hard-earned money goes — and a growing desire to keep more of it.

For retirees, the amount of the tax bite is a major question when seeking a new place to live. The search goes far beyond simply looking for a state that has no income tax because, as research over the years by Where to Retire has shown, you have to consider all the taxes in individual localities, and they can vary widely even within the same state.

Where to Retire researched 163 communities for its "America's Best Low-Tax Retirement Towns," which showed dramatic savings often are possible by relocating, sometimes not far from where you live. Though taxes constantly change, here's an example from the research: A retired couple with \$50,000 income and a \$150,000 home would pay around \$8,450 yearly in taxes



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*The choices range from  
seaside locales and mountain  
communities to places  
rich in history*

*By Mary Lu Abbott*

in Pittsburgh, PA, compared to about \$2,565 in Williamsburg, VA.

oak trees dripping Spanish moss and a feeling life moved like molasses. This is the Lowcountry of legends, slow-paced but not lethargic, historic but full of good food and fun times.

Though not on the Atlantic Ocean, it's on an inlet with marshlands, perfect for those who enjoy boating, fishing, swimming or even watching wildlife that congregates here. It's about an hour north of Savannah, GA, and a little longer south of Charleston, SC, so you have the multiple cultural advantages of both those larger cities but a quieter lifestyle. African-American, Spanish, early American and West Indies influences meld here,

We've compiled a list of eight towns that have lower-than-average tax bites for retirees. In fact, three — Williamsburg, VA, Beaufort, SC, and Bend, OR — rate as "tax heavens" and are among the 10 lowest in surveys.

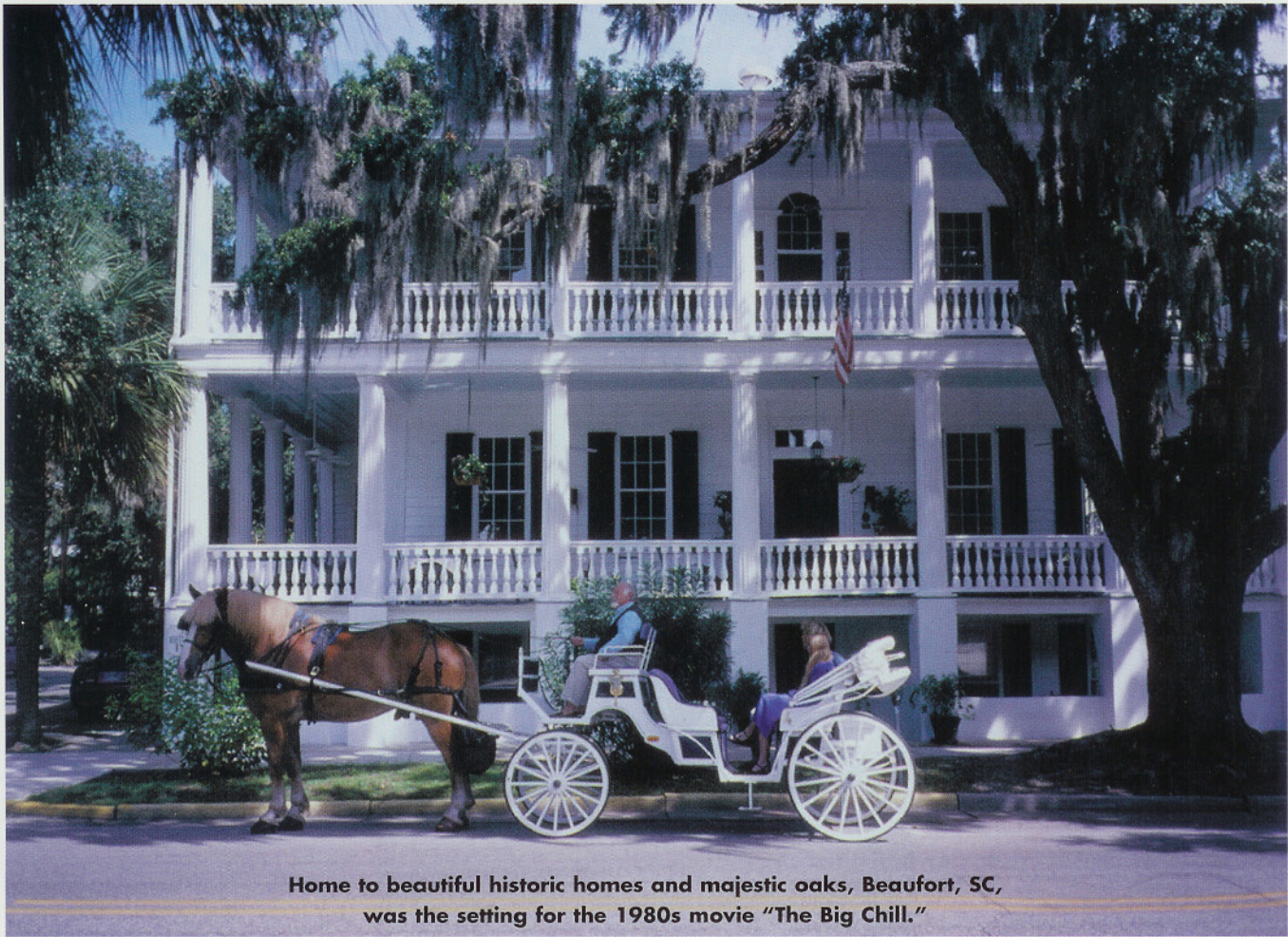
Retirement isn't just about low taxes, though. Each of these destinations has attractions and amenities for an active lifestyle.

**Beaufort, South Carolina**

## Beaufort, South Carolina

You saw Beaufort in the famous 1980s movie "The Big Chill," set in this coastal town with its large homes amid big

**Costumed characters bring the 18th century to life on the streets of Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia.**



Home to beautiful historic homes and majestic oaks, Beaufort, SC, was the setting for the 1980s movie "The Big Chill."

GREATER BEAUFORT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

contributing to colorful festivals and flavorful seasonings for the bounty of seafood.

If you're not the type to swing in a hammock, sip tea and read a book, you can kayak, explore museums and historic homes, enjoy a concert at the University of South Carolina-Beaufort Performing Arts Center or play golf. There's not a shortage of activities.

You can easily hop over to take advantage of Hilton Head Island, with its shopping, multiple golf courses and faster pace — and return to enjoy the quieter lifestyle here. Boat people, water sports aficionados and wildlife enthusiasts take to this area.

**Population:** About 14,000 in Beaufort, 125,212 in county.

**Climate:** High Low

January	58	39
July	91	74

**Cost of living:** Average to above average

**Median housing cost:** \$234,000 in

city (many homes are historic), \$166,250 in the county.

**Property taxes:** \$26.78 per \$100 of assessed value in city, from \$21.71 to \$27.94 per \$100 in county, with homes assessed at 4 percent of appraised value. Annual tax on a \$234,000 home in the city would be about \$2,507. On a

\$166,250 home in the county, taxes would be \$1,444-\$1,858. Those 65 and older are eligible for an exemption of \$50,000 off the value, reducing yearly tax to \$1,971 in the city, \$1,010-\$1,299 in the county. School tax relief can lower the tax due. Personal property taxes of the same rates apply to vehicles, currently assessed at 8.25 percent of appraised value.

**Information:** Greater Beaufort Chamber of Commerce, (800) 638-3525 or [www.beaufortsc.org](http://www.beaufortsc.org).

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Five Retirement Dream Homes - Page 146!

# WHERE TO RETIRE

January/February 2004

## Great Low-Tax Towns

Life Among the Vines in Healdsburg, CA

Best Neighborhood: Ford's Colony in Williamsburg, VA

At Home on the Mississippi Gulf Coast

Like It Hot? Try These Desert Oases

Undiscovered Haven: Ruidoso, NM

Lakeside Living in Traverse City, MI

Kissimmee-St. Cloud: Gateway to Central Florida

US \$4.99 CAN \$5.95

Rebecca W. Bass, your personal mortgage banker, thought you would find this article of great interest.

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