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Greenville among top 4 cities to retire in

Low cost of living, culture, low taxes, health care are all factors

By Jenny Munro
STAFF WRITER
jmunro@greenvillenews.com

Greenville residents already live in the city Fortune magazine recently selected as the fourth best city in the country for retirees.

For others, Greenville might be a place to consider when making retirement decisions.

Teresa Arnold, legislative director for AARP-SC, said her organization recommends people nearing retirement look obviously at their financial security and the health infrastructure of a city. But they also might "look to see if it has bike paths. They want to look at taxes. When they look at a house, they should look at more than price. Does it have universal design so they can age in place?"

She praised Greenville for its inclusion on the list along with Napa, Calif.; Ann Arbor, Mich.; San Antonio, Texas; and Palm Coast, Fla.

With a population of nearly 59,000 residents, Greenville has a stable real estate market that never soared during the bubble but didn't tank when the housing crisis arrived. Greenville's housing prices have dropped about 13 percent from their peak and probably won't fall more than another 1 percent.

For example, Fortune featured a 4-bedroom, 4,500-square-foot house for $495,000, Fortune magazine pointed out. An owner could expect to pay nearly $3,000 in taxes.

A major drawing card for the city is its vibrant downtown, complete with the Reedy River and Reedy Falls right off Main Street. Residents can find outdoor sculpture, theater, music and festivals of all types throughout the year. Downtown has been recognized by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Located halfway between Atlanta and Charlotte, Greenville is a business hub for South Carolina. It is part of the rapidly developing Interstate 85 corridor and also is close to Interstate 26.

Fortune criteria for the list included housing prices that don't have much further to fall, a low cost of living, culture, tax rates and health care.