STUDY:

MANY MORE MOVING TO SC THAN LEAVING

MOVING IN

TOP 10 STATES FOR PERCENT OF INBOUND MOVES

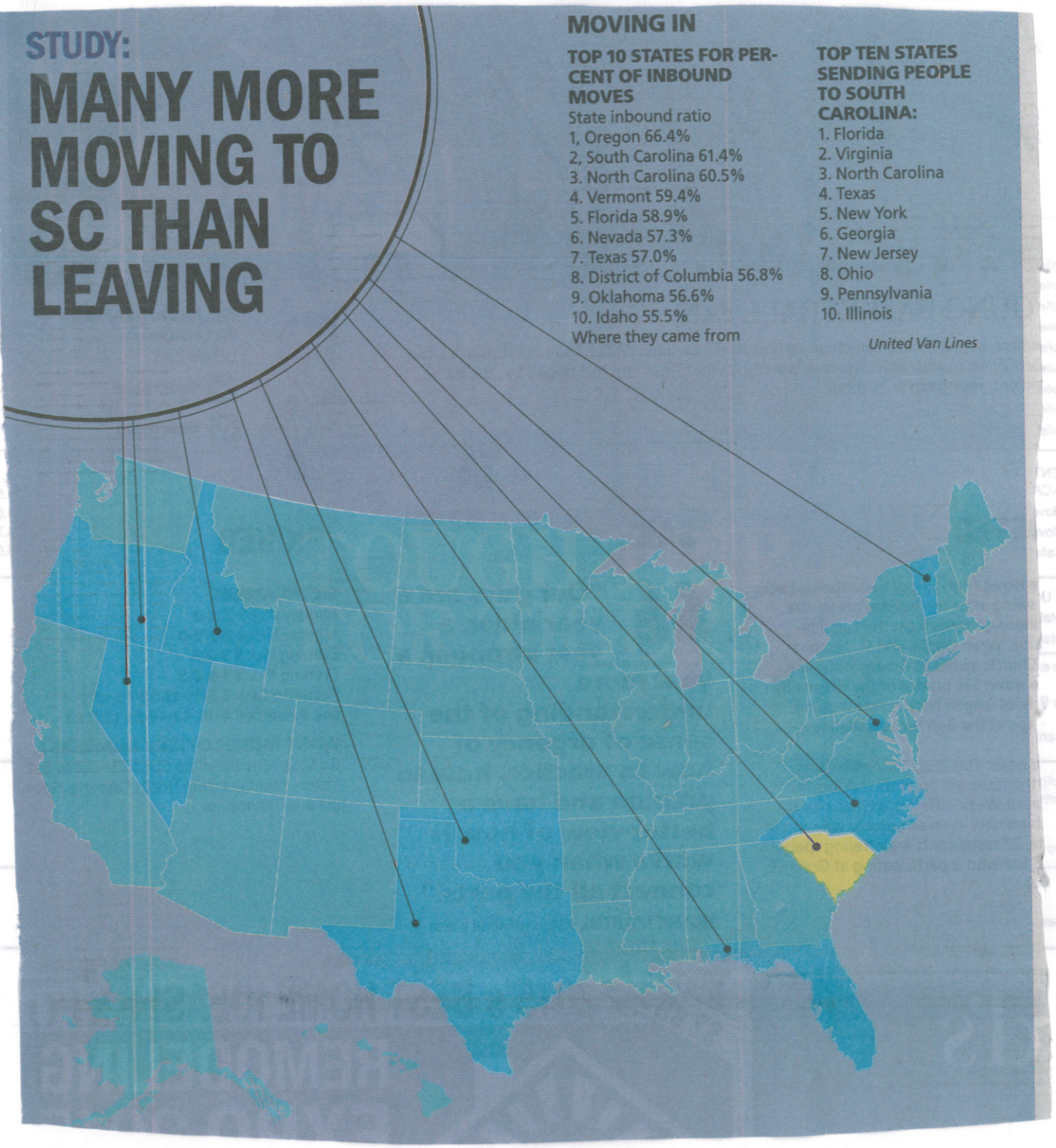
State inbound ratio
1, Oregon 66.4%
2, South Carolina 61.4%
3. North Carolina 60.5%
4. Vermont 59.4%
5. Florida 58.9%
6. Nevada 57.3%
7. Texas 57.0%
8. District of Columbia 56.8%
9. Oklahoma 56.6%
10. Idaho 55.5%

Where they came from

TOP TEN STATES SENDING PEOPLE TO SOUTH CAROLINA:

1. Florida
2. Virginia
3. North Carolina
4. Texas
5. New York
6. Georgia
7. New Jersey
8. Ohio
9. Pennsylvania
10. Illinois

United Van Lines



BY RUDOLPH BELL AND ANGELA DAVIS Staff Writers

Michigan natives Gary and Kathryn Catherman followed their two daughters to Greenville in October after retiring from the Kalamazoo public school district. // Living in an apartment in Verdae while they renovate a house in Cherrydale, the Cathermans say they've been surprised to find more traffic than in Kalamazoo. // Other than that, they're happy with their new home. // "The weather has been fabulous, and the people are so friendly," Kathryn Catherman said. "The downtown area is great. We take advantage of that whenever we can." // Expect to meet more newcomers like the Cathermans.

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MYKAL MCELDOWNEY/STAFF/
A truck awaits loading at Hilldrup Moving and Storage Inc., United's third largest agent, in Duncan on Tuesday. Hilldrup added a new warehouse to help house a rising number of inbound shipments.



MYKAL MCELDOWNEY/STAFF
Driver Scott Treat arranges ready-to-ship property of an inbound family inside Hilldrup Moving and Storage Inc. in Duncan. United's latest study of who's moving where ranks South Carolina No. 2 among contiguous states and Washington, D.C., for percentage of inbound moves.

MOVING

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The latest evidence that South Carolina is drawing people from other states comes from United Van Lines, the big moving company, which found that the Palmetto State was one of the most popular destinations for its customers moving within the continental United States during 2014.

United's latest study of who's moving where ranks South Carolina No. 2 among contiguous states and Washington, D.C., for the percentage of inbound moves.

Out of 4,088 household moves to or from South Carolina that United handled last year, 2,512, or 61.4 percent, were inbound.

Oregon took the No. 1 spot with 66 percent of movers inbound. The state with the highest percentage of outbound movers, 65 percent, was New Jersey.

Florida was the top sending state to South Carolina, with Virginia No. 2 and North Carolina No. 3, according to the United data, which does not include people who used other moving companies or moved themselves.

Many of the United customers moved to South Carolina for retirement, according to Michael Stoll, an expert on U.S. population movements who has scrutinized the moving company's study.

Stoll, professor of public policy at the University of California at Los Angeles, said 36 percent of those who moved to South Carolina and were surveyed by United cited retirement as the reason for moving —13 percent more than the average for other Southern states and about the same as Florida.

More than half of those surveyed who moved to South Carolina were over the age of 55.

About 44 percent cited job-related reasons, far less than the 65 percent average for other Southern states, Stoll said.

Greg Rudell moved to Greenville in December 2012 from Chicago to accept his current job as the vice president of finance for an energy services business.

The Tampa, Florida, native who lives downtown, said he loves South Carolina's diversity and friendliness and "living where people have real passions — whether it's their football teams or the food they make."

Billy Morrison, vice president and general manager of Hildrup Moving & Storage, a United agent in Duncan, said he was not surprised by the numbers in the study.



MYKAL MCELDOWNEY/STAFF/

Employees work to load a truck at Hilldrup Moving and Storage on Tuesday. Many of the United customers who have been moving to South Carolina are doing so for retirement.

Hildrup last year expanded its warehouse by 30,000 square feet in part to serve newcomers who need storage while they build a house or search for one to buy, Morrison said.

He thinks less expensive housing is one draw for those moving to South Carolina.

"Real estate is still relatively cheap compared to the rest of the country," Morrison said.

Mike Macfarlane, South Carolina state demographer, said the United study dovetails with data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Internal Revenue Service that also show more people moving to South Carolina than leaving.

He said most of South Carolina's population growth since the 2008 economic downturn has come from newcomers instead of births to existing residents.

A growing population means governments will reap more tax revenue but it also puts more of a strain on public infrastructure such as roads, sewer systems or schools, Macfarlane said.

Richard Blackwell, economic development director in Oconee County, said the county is happy to be drawing retirees to its lake communities because of the property tax revenue they bring with them.

The retirees come from Atlanta, Charlotte or Florida, drawn by a balmy climate with four seasons, recreational opportunities such as mountain hiking and lake boating and cultural amenities close by in Greenville and Clemson, Blackwell said.

"It's an asset to have the retirees here," he said.

Tim Brookshire's job as an administrator in surgical services at Greenville Memorial Hospital was the main reason his family left their native state of North Carolina and moved to Greenville from Charlotte.

They arrived in September, said Brookshire's wife, Blake, a physical therapist.

"We're living in an apartment now so we can get to know the area before we buy," she said.

Their move with their 5-year-old son and 2-year-old daughter has been "a breath of fresh air" thus far, Blake Brookshire said.

"People have been extraordinarily friendly and welcoming," she said.

In addition, she favors the topography here and the close access to hiking while remaining close to North Carolina where they both have family.

"It also seems like there are a lot of the same resources in Greenville that we had in Charlotte but maybe not as many people competing for those resources — the Broadway shows, the children's museum, the libraries," she said. "A lot of wonderful resources, but I don't feel as much of the hustle, bustle and the traffic that we felt in Charlotte."