



Most Retirees Plan a Move; Many Will Up-Size

By Jared Kaltwasser | March 6, 2015

Retirees want to live out their retirement years in a great home, and they're willing to move to achieve that goal, according to a new study.

The report, by Merrill Lynch and Age Wave, found 65% of retirees consider their current home to be their best-ever. If that's not the case at retirement, a majority said they're happy to relocate.

Sixty-four percent of retirees said they have moved at least once during retirement (37%) or plan to (27%).

Andy Sieg, head of global wealth management and retirement solutions at Bank of America Merrill Lynch, said those retiree housing shifts will impact the entire housing market.

"How and where our nation's aging population chooses to live will have widespread implications on the way homes are designed, the resources people will need, and how communities and businesses nationwide should prepare," he said, in a press release.

Merrill Lynch noted that the number of 65+ households is expected to jump by nearly 11 million in the next decade, far faster than other age groups.

Retirees move for a variety of reasons. About 3 in 10 said they move to be closer to family; 26% cited reducing expenses as their reason for moving. Changes in health (17%) and marital status (12%) also made the list.

And while the conventional wisdom may be that retirees who move would choose a smaller home, the study shows that's usually not the case. Nearly half (49%) of retiree-movers said they chose against downsizing at their last move. Meanwhile, 30% moved into a larger home. About 40% of pre-retirees who said they planned to move said they would like to try living in a new region. Of those, 39% said they planned to move to the south Atlantic; 25% said they'd like to move to the Mountain West; 16% said they want to live in the Pacific regions.

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