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The top 10 communities in the new edition of *Retirement Places Rated* and their ratings in 1999 (movement caused in part by changes in methodology and definition of geographic areas):

Now	1999	Now	1999
1. Florence, OR	30	6. Tucson, AZ	8
2. Scottsdale	7	7. Medford-Ashland, OR	11
3. Charleston, S.C.	2	8. Lake Winnepesaukee, NH	79
4. Melbourne-Palm Bay, FL	26	9. Daytona Beach, FL	17
5. No San Diego Co., CA	25	10. Fayetteville, AR	21

Retirement place rated best: Florence, OR

By Bob Minzesheimer
USA TODAY

Florence, Ore., a coastal community 180 miles southwest of Portland, is the best place to retire in the USA, according to the sixth edition of *Retirement Places Rated* (Wiley, \$23.99), published today.

The statistical study, first done in 1983, reflects a continuing shift from Florida as a retirement haven to the Northwest, the Rocky Mountains and the desert Southwest. The study of 203 places uses data in six categories: cost of living, climate, crime, economy, ambience (historic preservation, performing arts, restaurants) and services (hospitals, libraries, continuing education).

Florence and surrounding Lane County (pop. 338,000) rose from No. 30 in the last study, conducted in 1999, thanks to a better ambience and local economy. Its only drawback: a higher-than-average crime rate.

Florida retains two spots in the top 10: No. 4 Melbourne-Palm Bay and No. 9 Daytona Beach. But editor David Savageau sees "a slow but perceptible slide (in) retirement appeal because of population growth, crime, hurricanes, politics and because boomers view it as their gray-haired parents' retirement spot."

Among surprises he found:

- **California** is back as a retirement destination despite earthquakes, brushfires, mud slides and budget crises. It's now holding onto its older adults and attracting older newcomers, especially in Coachella Valley. During the 1990s, it exported more older adults than it attracted.

- **Tucson**, No. 6 overall, is No. 1 in ambience for its historic neighborhoods, good restaurants, performing arts and the great outdoors.

- **Las Vegas** is becoming too expensive. Suburban Hender-

son County dropped from No. 3 in 1999 to No. 53 partly because of rising housing costs.

Other retirement trends:

- **Seasonal residences.** For example, living in Las Vegas in winter and upper Michigan in summer.

- **Serial relocation.** Retirees who keep moving, spending perhaps two years in each location, rehabbing a home and selling it at a profit.

- **Living nowhere.** About 1 million people are full-time RV enthusiasts.

- **Small-group** time-sharing. Households buy a variety of properties and rotate between them.