

By: Blake

H.B. No. 1663

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT

2 relating to the creation and operation of a Texas Certified
3 Retirement Community Program.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

5 SECTION 1. Subchapter L, Chapter 481, Government Code, is
6 amended by adding Section 481.175 to read as follows:

7 Sec. 481.175. TEXAS CERTIFIED RETIREMENT COMMUNITY
8 PROGRAM. (a) In this section, "program" means the Texas Certified
9 Retirement Community Program.

10 (b) The office shall, after appropriate research has been
11 conducted, establish and maintain a Texas Certified Retirement
12 Community Program in which retirees and potential retirees are
13 encouraged to make their homes in Texas communities that have met
14 the criteria for certification by the office as a Texas certified
15 retirement community. In support of the program, the office shall
16 identify issues of interest to retirees or potential retirees to
17 inform those persons of the benefits of living in Texas. Issues of
18 interest to retirees or potential retirees may include:

- 19 (1) Texas' state and local tax structure;
20 (2) housing opportunities and cost;
21 (3) climate;
22 (4) personal safety;
23 (5) working opportunities;
24 (6) health care services and other services along the

1 continuum of care, including home-based and community-based
2 services, housing for the elderly, assisted living, personal care,
3 and nursing care facilities;

4 (7) transportation;

5 (8) continuing education;

6 (9) leisure living;

7 (10) recreation;

8 (11) the performing arts;

9 (12) festivals and events;

10 (13) sports at all levels; and

11 (14) other services and facilities that are necessary

12 to enable persons to age in the community and in the least
13 restrictive environment.

14 (c) During the preliminary, research phase of the program,
15 the office shall consult with the Office of Rural Community Affairs
16 to establish rural parameters for program certification.

17 (d) The mission of the program is to:

18 (1) promote this state as a retirement destination to
19 retirees and potential retirees both in and outside Texas;

20 (2) assist Texas communities in their efforts to
21 market themselves as retirement locations and to develop
22 communities that retirees would find attractive for a retirement
23 lifestyle;

24 (3) assist in the development of retirement
25 communities and life-care communities for economic development
26 purposes and as a means of providing a potential workforce and
27 enriching Texas communities; and

1 (4) encourage tourism to Texas in the form of mature
2 market travel to Texas in reference to retirement desirability for
3 the future and for the visitation of those who have chosen to retire
4 in Texas.

5 (e) The office shall coordinate the development and
6 planning of the program with the Office of Rural Community Affairs
7 and any other state or local entity interested in participating in
8 and promoting the program.

9 (f) To obtain certification as a Texas certified retirement
10 community, the following criteria must be met:

11 (1) a resolution endorsing the local retirement
12 recruitment effort must be adopted by the governing body of the
13 applicable local political subdivision;

14 (2) the program must have an official sponsoring
15 organization that fulfills the duties described by Subsection (g);

16 (3) a hospital and emergency medical services must be
17 readily accessible to the community;

18 (4) the community must maintain information on both
19 resale housing and rental housing to ensure that the quantity is
20 sufficient to meet the needs of potential new retiree residents;
21 and

22 (5) the community must conduct a retiree desirability
23 assessment that emphasizes appropriate factors, including medical
24 services, adult education opportunities, shopping, recreation,
25 cultural opportunities, safety, aging services, and other services
26 along a continuum of care, including home-based and community-based
27 services, housing for the elderly, assisted living, personal care,

1 and nursing care facilities.

2 (g) An official sponsoring organization shall:

3 (1) develop a community profile similar to that used
4 by chambers of commerce, to include facts regarding crime
5 statistics, tax information, recreational opportunities, and
6 housing availability;

7 (2) appoint an individual who will be accountable to
8 the community and to the state; and

9 (3) commit a minimum of \$10,000 each year for the local
10 program.

11 (h) Each local political subdivision must have a general
12 retiree attraction committee and a minimum of four councils as
13 follows:

14 (1) a community inventory/assessment council, which
15 shall conduct an unbiased inventory and assessment of whether the
16 community can offer the basics that retirees demand and develop a
17 professional portfolio containing brief biographies of
18 professionals in the community;

19 (2) a community relations/fund-raising council, which
20 shall locate retirees living in the community, act as salespersons
21 for the program, raise money necessary to run the program, recruit
22 council members, organize special events, and promote and
23 coordinate the program with local entities;

24 (3) a marketing and promotion council, which shall
25 establish a community image, evaluate target markets, develop and
26 distribute promotional material, and coordinate advertising and
27 public relations campaigns; and

1 (4) an ambassadors council, which shall serve as the
2 first contact with prospective retirees, provide tours and tour
3 guides when prospects visit the community, respond to inquiries,
4 log contacts made, invite prospects to special community events,
5 and maintain continual contact with prospects until the time the
6 prospects make a retirement location decision.

7 (i) A retiree attraction committee shall:

8 (1) submit a marketing plan detailing the mission, the
9 target market, the competition, an analysis of the community's
10 strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and the
11 strategies the program will employ to attain its goals;

12 (2) work to gain the support of churches, clubs,
13 businesses, and the local media, as necessary for the success of the
14 program; and

15 (3) submit a commitment and long-term plan as
16 described by Subsection (k).

17 (j) During the certification process, a representative of
18 the retirement attraction committee shall attend state training
19 meetings.

20 (k) Before certification is awarded, the retiree attraction
21 committee shall submit a written three-year commitment to the
22 program and a long-term plan outlining steps the community will
23 undertake to maintain its desirability as a destination for
24 retirees. The long-term plan must outline plans to correct any
25 facility and service deficiencies identified in the retiree
26 desirability assessment required by Subsection (f)(5). The written
27 commitment and long-range plan shall be forwarded to the office.

1 (1) Not later than the 90th day after the date of
2 certification, the governing body of a local political subdivision
3 shall submit a complete retiree attraction package to the office.

4 (m) On the certification of a community as a Texas certified
5 retirement community under this section, the office shall provide
6 the following assistance to the community:

7 (1) assistance in the training of local staff and
8 volunteers;

9 (2) ongoing oversight and guidance in marketing, plus
10 updates on national retirement trends;

11 (3) inclusion in the state's national advertising and
12 public relations campaigns and travel show promotions, including a
13 prominent feature on the office's Internet website;

14 (4) eligibility for state financial assistance for
15 brochures, support material, and advertising; and

16 (5) an annual evaluation and progress assessment on
17 maintaining and improving the community's desirability as a home
18 for retirees.

19 (n) The office shall adopt rules to implement this section.

20 SECTION 2. The Texas Economic Development and Tourism
21 Office shall implement the program created by Section 481.175,
22 Government Code, as added by this Act, not later than September 1,
23 2006.

24 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2005.