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# BONNER COUNTY DAILY BEE

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GOOD MORNING!

Today is  
**Thursday**



Breezy; rain or snow likely

Highs  
30s-40s/A11

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1 DOLLAR  
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HOME-DELIVERED FOR 49¢ PER DAY OR LESS

## Sandpoint tabbed a top place to retire

By CAMERON RASMUSSEN  
Staff writer

SANDPOINT — It's no secret that Sandpoint is a popular place to spend twilight years, but *Where to Retire Magazine* is about to spread the word even more.

The Houston, Texas,-based publication features the Panhandle mountain town among its top eight tax-friendly retirement locations. Sandpoint joins Bellingham, Wash.; Charleston, S. C.; Eugene, Ore.; Flathead Valley, Mont.; Pensacola, Fla.; Reno, Nev. and Roanoke, Va., in the running. The March-April issue hits newsstands, Barnes & Noble and the rest of its 200,000 circulation on Feb. 18.

According to *Where to Retire* editor Annette Fuller,

Sandpoint appeals to retirees in a variety of ways. However, the tax incentives are an important and practical consideration for many of 700,000 Americans who relocate for retirement. Combined with the town's other assets, the low taxes make Sandpoint an enticing option, Fuller said.

"In addition to being easy on the pocketbook, Sandpoint offers other amenities that appeal to retirees — beautiful vistas, outdoor adventures, and cultural and social opportunities that keep retirees engaged with the community," she added.

Sandpoint City Planner Jeremy Grimm identifies several different factors that make the town financially feasible for retirees. Idaho takes a three-pronged approach to taxation, taking its cut from sales, prop-

erty and income alike. However, seniors get a solid deduction for retirement benefits, and primary residences are allowed a 50-percent tax exemption on assessed value. Qualifying seniors can also apply for up to \$1,320 of property tax relief.

Meanwhile, the 6-percent sales tax does not include prescription drugs — good news for minimizing many retirees' health care costs. Finally, Social Security benefits are not taxed.

Grimm also noted Sandpoint's distinct position in the real estate market. While the cost of local home ownership is higher than desirable given the average Bonner County household income of just over \$40,000, the town fares better against comparable locations like Jackson Hole, Wyo., or Aspen, Colo., Grimm said.