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A Comparison of the Importance of Older Residents to Tourism-Based Economies

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ABSTRACT

This research assumes that older residents are an important economic entity that may not be fully appreciated by the community. "Seniors" are often portrayed as a drain on local healthcare systems, a dangerous addition to local roadways, and a net drain on local resources. These perceived difficulties may be more acute in geographic areas where seniors tend to migrate when they retire.

This study compares the relative importance of residents over the age of 64 to the local economies of Asheville, North Carolina, Las Vegas, Nevada, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and Orlando, Florida. It is assumed that each of these tourist destinations attracts retirees to such an extent that older citizens are a larger proportion of the area's population and economic base than the average community. The presence of older residents in each community is assumed to enhance the economic activity to a greater degree than local leaders and younger residents may realize.

Variables addressed include impacts on housing, income, healthcare, retail sales, and spending patterns. Previous results indicate that the larger tourist economies of Las Vegas and Orlando do not benefit as much from older residents than the smaller destinations of Asheville and Myrtle Beach.

End of abstract

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