

Survive & Thrive February: Escape the City: Live Small, Cheap, and Safe in America

Dear Survivor,

After decades of urbanization, Americans are beginning to rebel against the “bigger is better” mentality of city-living. Seeking a smaller, more affordable, sustainable, and secure lifestyle, some are venturing out from the mega-cities in search of a different life.

A number of techniques have become popular in an effort to save, especially scaling down the size of one’s home. [Living small and saving big](#) is even better when it’s coupled with [living in a state that treats you more like a human](#) than an ATM machine it can withdraw money from.



By HELEN HOTSON @ SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Carey L. Biron explains this trend at *Thompson Reuters Foundation*, writing:

Disaffected Californians make up a substantial number of clients for Black Rifle Real Estate, which says online that it helps people “Flee the City to the freedom and safety of Rural America and the famed American Redoubt.”

Broker Todd Savage said his business is at an all-time high, driven by frustration with how many U.S. cities are governed.

“Most of our clients are now looking to sell their postage-stamp size properties ... and make what we call a ‘Strategic Relocation’ to a free state,” Savage said in an email.

Driven by new demand, the company is expanding outside of the so-called Redoubt — to Arizona, which Savage said enjoys lower taxes and far looser gun controls than liberal California.

“Arizona is the new Idaho for many seeking relief from the tyranny in California,” he said.

EMBRACE LAND

Conservatives are not alone in the new land rush.

Haynes said his clients in North Carolina are evenly split between survivalists and “homesteaders” — young, liberal, less affluent families seeking peace, quiet and a sustainable life.

“When I started out in 1973, the big thing then was the ‘back to the land’ movement,” said Neil Shelton with the Ozark Land Company, a developer active in Missouri and Arkansas.

What he is seeing now is a “new iteration” of that movement, he said, and one driven by innovation: the pre-built ‘tiny home’, typically 400-600 square feet.

Small structures have made home ownership more affordable, he said, for some accelerating the new mood of escapism.

“This tiny-house movement is the biggest thing I’ve seen since” the 1970s, Shelton said.

Kim Moore, 63, said she and her husband had bought nearly 60 acres in North Carolina after enjoying a holiday there.

“I’m not a survivalist, but as much as possible, I’d like to live on the land,” she said.

The article shows that there are a number of reasons for fleeing the city, but they all involve finding and preserving a better quality of life.

Guess Which States Americans Are Moving To

Every year United Van Lines performs its National Movers Study, analyzing where people are moving to, and where they’re coming from, to get a picture of the trends for each state.

This year, like last year, Vermont won the highest percentage of inbound traffic. *Vermont Business Magazine* was happy to announce this, writing “Vermont is the only state to have achieved greater than a 70 percent in-bound rate, which it has done the last two years (74.3% in 2019 and 72.7% in 2018).”

You can see on the map below that Americans mostly moved out of states with high taxation (California, NY, Connecticut, New Jersey, Illinois) and into places with low taxation (Arizona, South Carolina, Florida, Idaho).



BY 4 PM PRODUCTION @ SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

If you are considering a move for retirement, you may want to investigate the reasons people are moving out of some states, and into others before you [choose where to retire](#).

Here’s more from the study by United Van Lines:

According to the results of [United Van Lines’ 43rd Annual National Movers Study](#), which tracks customers’ state-to-state migration patterns over the past year, **Idaho** saw the highest percentage of inbound migration among states experiencing more than 250 moves* with United Van Lines: 67.4 percent. This is Idaho’s first time leading the list of inbound states in more than 25 years. However, for the second consecutive year, the study found that more residents moved out of **New Jersey** than any other state, as 68.5 percent of New Jersey moves were outbound.

The study and its accompanying survey—released today—also revealed that more Baby Boomer generation Americans moved than any other age group last year, as those aged 55-74 years old accounted for more than 45 percent of all inbound United Van Lines moves in 2019.

Oregon, at 65.7 percent inbound, followed Idaho as the second most popular moving destination nationally, experiencing more than 2,800 total moves. States in the Mountain West and Pacific West regions, including **Arizona** (63.2 percent), **Washington** (59.5 percent) and **New Mexico** (43.9 percent), continued to see high percentages of inbound moves. Each of these states ranked among the top inbound states in the study's 2019 data.

In the Southeastern region of the United States, several states—including **South Carolina** (61.8 percent) and **North Carolina** (57.3 percent)—were popular moving destinations in 2019. The study revealed that major reasons for moving south were retirement (24 percent) and job change (46 percent). Following this trend, **Florida** (58.1 percent) joined the list of top 10 inbound states for the first time since 2015, ranking seventh. Among all states, more residents flocked to Florida for retirement (40.5 percent) and for lifestyle change (22.97 percent) than any other state.

“Key factors like the Baby Boomer generation re-locating upon reaching retirement age as well as states’ economic performances and housing costs drove these 2019 moving patterns,” said Michael A. Stoll, economist and professor in the Department of Public Policy at the University of California, Los Angeles. “United Van Lines’ study encompasses data consistent with the broader migration trends to western and southern regions that we’ve been seeing for several years now.”

Each year, United Van Lines’ National Movers Study reveals the business data of inbound and outbound moves on a state-by-state basis. Alongside the study, United Van Lines conducts a survey to examine the reasons and motivations behind these migration patterns. The 2019 survey revealed that, across all regions, a major driver of migration is a career change, as approximately one out every two people who moved with United Van Lines in the past year moved for a new job or company transfer. In 2019, **Washington, D.C.** saw the largest influx of residents due to a new job/company transfer at 78 percent.

An exodus persists among Northeastern states, as **New Jersey** (68.5 percent), **New York** (63.1 percent) and **Connecticut** (63 percent) were all included among the top 10 outbound states for the fifth consecutive year. Primary reasons cited for leaving the Northeast were retirement (26.85 percent) and new job/company transfer (40.12 percent).

Midwestern states including **Illinois** (66.5 percent), **Kansas** (58.5 percent), **Ohio** (57.8 percent), **Michigan** (56.9 percent) and **Iowa** (55 percent), all returned to the list of top 10 outbound states in 2019. According to the survey results, the exodus from the Midwest was primarily due to a desire to retire elsewhere (22.8 percent) and for a new job/company transfer (51 percent).

“United Van Lines, as the nation’s largest household goods mover, is uniquely able to identify the year’s most and least popular moving destinations for Americans through our annual National Movers Study,” said Eily Cummings, director of corporate communications at United Van Lines. “For more than 40 years now, this study and survey offers year-over-year insights into where and why Americans are moving.”

Moving In

The top inbound states (with 250 moves or more) of 2019 were:

1. Idaho
2. Oregon
3. Arizona
4. South Carolina
5. Washington
6. District of Columbia
7. Florida
8. South Dakota
9. North Carolina
10. New Mexico

New to the 2019 top inbound list is **Florida** at No. 7, with an inbound percentage of 58.1.

Moving Out

The top outbound states for 2019 were:

1. New Jersey
2. Illinois
3. New York
4. Connecticut
5. Kansas
6. Ohio
7. California
8. Michigan
9. North Dakota
10. Iowa

While **New Jersey** (68.5 percent) has ranked among the top 10 outbound states for the past 11 years, **California** (43.1 percent) was new to the top 10 outbound in 2019. Of those who left California in 2019, nearly 2 out of 5 (39.02 percent) cited a new job/company transfer as their reason for moving.

Migration: Where High-Tax State Exiles Are Going

“Where are high-tax state exiles going?” asks the *WSJ’s* Review and Outlook. “Zero income tax Florida drew \$16.5 billion in adjusted gross income last year.” It’s a trend you and I have been watching for years and will continue to see as Democrats ruin the fiscal health of the states they’re leaving.

The good news is that the inflow will give states like Florida more representation in D.C.
The bad is they packed bankrupting politics in the U-Haul.

The Editors at *The Wall Street Journal* write:

Many have also fled to Arizona (\$3.5 billion), Texas (\$3.5 billion), North Carolina (\$3 billion), Nevada (\$2.3 billion), Colorado (\$2.1 billion), Washington (\$1.7 billion) and Idaho (\$1.1 billion). Texas, Nevada and Washington don’t have income taxes.

Democrats in high-tax states blame the 2017 tax reform, which limited the federal deduction for

state and local taxes to \$10,000 and thus increased the effective federal tax rate for the well-to-do. The cap took effect in 2018, but most taxpayers would not have felt the pain until they paid their taxes last year. Taxpayer flight may accelerate even more now.

All of this explains why Democrats are nervous about the 2020 Census, which will decide apportionment of House seats and electoral votes for the next decade. California, Illinois and New York are each projected to lose a seat while Texas is forecast to pick up three, Florida two and Arizona one.

We know progressives believe in redistribution, and it's kind of Democrats to spread their wealth and political power to other states.

- [Best and Worst Tax States in 2019: A Quick List Retirees Need to See](#)
- [Your Retirement Life: This State is Dominant Once Again](#)
- [Does Your State Just Cost Too Much to Retire In?](#)
- [The Best States for Retiree Taxation](#)
- [Americans Want to Leave Their High Tax States](#)

You'll Love This if You're Dreaming of an Active Retirement Life

My clients are ski bums.

Well, not exactly, considering they own their own place in the Tetons.

But rising before dawn, queuing up for the first tram, especially on powder days, is a ski bum's life. That's why it was no surprise to receive this email:

Hi EJ!

Snow over a hundred inches so far in 2020! Every day a powder day! Several more days for this storm cycle!

We have been very happy with your care of our financials. Skiing has been fabulous. More powder tomorrow!

Will give you a call when we come up for air!



When they get home in the spring, to Lake Champlain, they like to hike up the local resort to catch the last tracks of the season. Then they're off on a working vacation to Hawaii—big wave windsurfing is work.

In the Fall, there's a windsurfing trip to Cape Hatteras and extended stays along the way to visit friends and family. Nice life!

Don't worry, I'm used to it. Someone's gotta man the fort.

Survive and Thrive this Month.

Warm regards,

E.J.

E.J.
"Your Survival Guy"

- If someone forwarded this to you, and you want to learn more about Your Survival Guy, read about me [here](#).
- If you would like to contact me and receive a response, please email me at ejsmith@yoursurvivalguy.com.
- Would you like to receive an email alert letting you know when Survive and Thrive is published each month? You can subscribe to my free email [here](#).
- You can also follow me on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#).

P.S. *Don't let your retirement dream community become a nightmare.* When it comes to your living situation in retirement, there are developments (literally) that may turn your idyllic retirement community into an "anywhere in the USA" suburb. As liberal states like California, crush the middle-class, neighboring states such as Idaho, and towns west of Boise like Star, pick up the slack, [explains](#) Dan Frosch in the *WSJ*:

Over the past nine years, Star's population has doubled to more than 10,000. Most of the growth has come from people like the Turnipseeds who uprooted from the West Coast to the greater Boise area—known as the Treasure Valley—drawn by the promise of less stressful and more affordable living. By 2040, Star's population could surpass 35,000, according to city projections.

Unfortunately, uncontrolled growth like we're seeing in Star poisons small-town communities. At the end of the day, it's the developers who usually win.

Mayor Trevor Chadwick said the city had no legal standing to impose a strict limit on development, writes Frosch.

"I don't want to be the first to go put a moratorium on growth, only to get sued and have to pay millions of dollars to a developer because we did them wrong," the mayor said.

The Turnipseeds made an offer on a house 50 miles northeast in Crouch, ID—pop. 180—but didn't get it.

What if this happens to you?

Stay flexible and understand your dream retirement community may change in ways you didn't expect.

P.P.S. The MQ-9 Reaper is the drone that killed Iranian Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani outside Baghdad. The drone was proposed by the Air Force in 2003. Here's a description of the drone and its mission from the Air Force:

Mission

The MQ-9 Reaper is an armed, multi-mission, medium-altitude, long-endurance remotely piloted aircraft that is employed primarily against dynamic execution targets and secondarily as an intelligence collection asset. Given its significant loiter time, wide-range sensors, multi-mode communications suite, and precision weapons — it provides a unique capability to perform strike, coordination, and reconnaissance against high-value, fleeting, and time-sensitive targets.

Reapers can also perform the following missions and tasks: intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, close air support, combat search and rescue, precision strike, buddy-lase, convoy/raid overwatch, target development, and terminal air guidance. The MQ-9's capabilities make it uniquely qualified to conduct irregular warfare operations in support of combatant commander objectives.



A MQ-9 REAPER SITS ON THE RAMP AT KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, AFGHANISTAN ON JULY 10, 2012. (U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO/TSGT. STEPHEN HUDSON)

Features

The MQ-9 baseline system carries the Multi-Spectral Targeting System, which has a robust suite of visual sensors for targeting. The MTS-B integrates an infrared sensor, color/monochrome daylight TV camera, image-intensified TV camera, laser range finder /designator, and laser illuminator. The full-motion video from each of the imaging sensors can be viewed as separate video streams or fused.

The unit also incorporates a laser range finder/designator, which precisely designates targets for employment of laser-guided munitions, such as the Guided Bomb Unit-12 Paveway II. The Reaper is also equipped with a

synthetic aperture radar to enable future GBU-38 Joint Direct Attack Munitions targeting. The MQ-9 can also employ four laser-guided , Air-to-Ground Missile (AGM)-114 Hellfire missiles, which provide highly accurate, low-collateral damage, anti-armor and anti-personnel engagement capabilities.



AN MQ-9 REAPER SITS ON THE FLIGHT LINE AT HURLBURT FIELD FLA., APRIL 24, 2014. THE MQ-9 REAPER IS AN ARMED, MULTI-MISSION, MEDIUM-ALTITUDE, LONG-ENDURANCE REMOTELY PILOTED AIRCRAFT THAT IS EMPLOYED PRIMARILY AS AN INTELLIGENCE-COLLECTION ASSET AND SECONDARILY AGAINST DYNAMIC EXECUTION TARGETS. (U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO/STAFF SGT. JOHN BAINTER)

In its secondary role as an ISR asset, the MQ-9 is part of a system that support strike aircraft and ground commanders by acquiring and tracking dynamic targets or other useful intelligence. It is also capable of supporting a wide range of operations such as coastal and border surveillance, weapons tracking, embargo enforcement, humanitarian/disaster assistance, support of peacekeeping and counter-narcotic operations. Utilizing satellite communication links, the RPA can acquire and pass real-time imagery data to ground users around the clock, and beyond-line-of-sight (BLOS).

The remotely piloted aircraft can be disassembled and loaded into a single container for deployment worldwide. The entire system can be transported in the C-130 Hercules, or larger aircraft. The MQ-9 aircraft operates from standard U.S. airfields with clear line-of-sight to the ground data terminal antenna, which provides line-of-sight communications for takeoff and landing. The PPSL provides over-the-horizon communications for the aircraft and sensors.

The primary concept of operations, remote split operations, employs a launch-and-recovery ground control station for take-off and landing operations at the forward operating location, while the crew based in continental United States executes command and control of the remainder of the mission via beyond-line-of-sight links. Remote split operations result in a smaller number of personnel deployed to a forward location, consolidate control of the different flights in one location, and as such, simplify command and control functions as well as the logistical supply challenges for the weapons system.

Background

The U.S. Air Force proposed the MQ-9 Reaper system in response to the Department of Defense directive to support initiatives of overseas contingency operations. It is larger and more powerful than the MQ-1 Predator, and is designed to execute time-sensitive targets with persistence and precision, and destroy or disable those

targets. The “M” is the DOD designation for multi-role, and “Q” means remotely piloted aircraft system. The “9” indicates it is the ninth in the series of remotely piloted aircraft systems.



AIRMAN 1ST CLASS ROBERT LAWRENCE AND STAFF SGT. JONATHAN ADAMS, 849TH AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE SQUADRON WEAPONS LOAD CREW, LOAD AN INERT MISSILE DURING THE QUARTERLY LOAD CREW COMPETITION AT HOLLOMAN AIR FORCE BASE, N.M., OCT. 11, 2013. THE MQ-9 REAPER LOAD CREW COMPETED TO HAVE THEIR SKILLS EVALUATED ALONGSIDE THE F-22 RAPTOR AND GERMAN AIR FORCE TORNADO LOAD CREWS. FOR THE COMPETITION, POINTS WERE AWARDED FOR WEAPONS LOADING, TOOL KIT INSPECTION AND UNIFORM INSPECTION. (U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS AARON MONTROYA/RELEASED)

General characteristics

Primary function: find, fix, and finish targets

Contractor: General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc.

Power plant: Honeywell TPE331-10GD turboprop engine

Thrust: 900 shaft horsepower maximum

Wingspan: 66 feet (20.1 meters)

Length: 36 feet (11 meters)

Height: 12.5 feet (3.8 meters)

Weight: 4,900 pounds (2,223 kilograms) empty

Maximum takeoff weight: 10,500 pounds (4,760 kilograms)

Fuel capacity: 4,000 pounds (602 gallons)

Payload: 3,750 pounds (1,701 kilograms)

Speed: cruise speed around 230 mph (200 knots)

Range: 1,150 miles (1,000 nautical miles)

Ceiling: Up to 50,000 feet (15,240 meters)

Armament: combination of AGM-114 Hellfire missiles, GBU-12 Paveway II and GBU-38 Joint Direct Attack Munitions

Crew (remote): two (pilot and sensor operator)

Unit cost: \$64.2 million (includes four aircraft, sensors, GCSs, and Comm.) (fiscal 2006 dollars)

Initial operating capability: October 2007