

Leaving Lake County

By Woodrow Wilcox

A few years ago, a new movie named “Leaving Las Vegas” was in theaters. Maybe a reality television show about “Leaving Lake County” would be appropriate now.

This week, I met another senior citizen who decided to leave Lake County because of the high property taxes in her neighborhood.

“I could stay here and keep paying the property taxes, but it would be a struggle,” she told me. “But, at my age, why should I struggle like that when I can move and end the hassle?”

Two years ago, I warned local business leaders who served senior citizens that the high property taxes that were coming would significantly reduce the senior citizen population of Lake County and, thus, their client base. Many of those local business leaders laughed at me then. They are not laughing now.

The senior citizen that told me that she was leaving Lake County, Indiana, said that she had bought a home in Campbellsville, Kentucky for \$79,000 that had a property tax bill of only \$500. That property tax bill is significantly lower than what she faced in Lake County. But, you don’t need to move to Kentucky to save on property tax bills.

My mother checked with our cousins in other parts of the state to learn their property tax burdens. One cousin in Seymour, Indiana has the same size home as my mother in a town with the same population as Griffith where my mother lives. But, the cousin’s property tax bill is less than 25 percent of my mother’s property tax bill in Griffith.

I hope that those senior citizens who remain in Lake County, but don’t like the high property tax bills, will remember that every one of Lake County’s incumbent state legislators voted for the two laws that created the Lake County property tax crisis. When those legislators run for re-election, I hope that a majority of voters will remember what they did to create the Lake County property tax crisis.

Written in 2005.