



Homelessness-What to Do About It

By Joe Steckler, President, Helping Seniors of Brevard County

What to do about homelessness? An excellent question, one that Governor DeSantis is pushing our local authorities to address. The Florida legislature has approved a measure barring homeless people from sleeping or camping on public property. The bill urges local governments to create homeless camps, with security, sanitation, and access to mental health services. Cities and counties could be sued if they do not comply with the new restrictions. WOW—now all we need is something similar for affordable housing.

I have lived in Brevard for 36 years and the homeless problem has been with us the whole time. In 1997, my staff at the Brevard Alzheimer’s Foundation found a flooded-out family living in a tent in Wickham Park. We got them a place to stay until we could locate housing for them. Fast forward to today, when a member of my poker group was taking me to a medical appointment. He pointed out a man on a bicycle with everything he owned on him and the bicycle. Daily Bread is now gone; who serves the homeless that we have in all Brevard cities?

For years we have assembled volunteers to count the number of homeless people in Brevard County over a two-day period. What have we done with the statistics? Has any action been taken to resolve the problem? The Governor’s bill is a step in the right direction and may prevent Brevard from becoming a homeless mecca like San Francisco, New York City, Chicago, and Denver.

Wouldn’t it be nice if Brevard County Housing and Human Services developed a plan to resolve the problem? There are federal grants available to help fund a place in Brevard where homeless people could be housed and trained to do a job. If the Governor signs this bill, we will all be in for a shock. County Commissioners will be forced to meet the law’s requirements. Why wait for a law to be passed when something could be done, something that should have been on the drawing board a long time ago.

The requirements posed in the law passed in the House and Senate are something the Governor wants. I highly doubt Florida cities will want to comply, but if it is the law then action must be taken. I want the bill to be passed even though my taxes will go up. At least they will be used for tangible outcomes.

It is time that the staff of the County government, who all work for us, do something to develop a plan and funding to build and manage a homeless facility. We can turn our homeless into productive citizens. That 25 million dollars of COVID money could have been used to start the ball rolling. A one penny tax could be aligned with federal and/or state money to do the same. §

Contact Helping Seniors at 321-473-7770, at www.HelpingSeniorsofBrevard.org, or at P.O. Box 372936, Satellite Beach, FL 32937.

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SENIOR SCENE MONTHLY TRAVEL TIPS

Trips That Seniors Need to Take as Soon as You Retire Part 1



Senior Travel Agent Chris Morse has over 35 years travel agent experience.

You are retired or getting close! — and if you’re reading this, you probably love to travel. With the youngest baby boomers turning 59 this year, and the first group around age 77, most of us are likely retired or semi-retired. According to AARP’s 2023 Travel Trends survey, the majority of travelers over age 50 (67 percent) planned to travel in 2024, taking at least four trips throughout the year. And since 2023 has brought record-breaking travel numbers, it’s likely that even more boomers are hitting the road this year. And while older travelers were more likely to plan a domestic trip last year, about 43 percent of people ages 50 and up planned to travel both within the U.S. and abroad.

Blue Ridge Parkway

Billed as “America’s Favorite Drive,” this spectacular 469-mile route joins Shenandoah National Park in Virginia and Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina. Take as much or as little time as you want on this scenic ride, which averages between 3,000 and 4,000 feet in elevation. Delight in the extraordinary views from roadside pullover areas, or hike a few of the 80-plus trails. From campgrounds to upscale log homes, plenty of lodging is available, and you can enjoy traditional music, culture, biking, history, nature, and even golf along the way.

In Asheville, North Carolina, explore the majestic Biltmore Estate, created in 1895 by George Vanderbilt. Self-guided tours take guests through the 250-room house and garden, described as a “time travel experience.” You can spend the night at the Estate’s hotel, called The Inn, or in your own cottage. All the information you need to plan your excursion can be found on the Blue Ridge Parkway website, plus they offer a smartphone app that includes scenic and historic sites, lodging, and activities to guide you along the way.

Rocky Mountaineer

Want to leave the driving to someone else? A luxurious journey through the Canadian Rockies aboard one of Rocky Mountaineer’s comfortable, glass-domed railway cars might be your ticket. Choose from several options, like the Grand Adventure Circle Journey. This 11-night trip includes five days aboard the Rocky Mountaineer and overnight stays in Whistler, Jasper, Lake Louise, and more.

The journey begins in Vancouver with time to explore and rest. The next morning, you’ll board the Rocky Mountaineer and travel British Columbia’s Sea-to-Sky Corridor on your way to the resort town of Whistler. Up next: Wind your way through farmland and stunning canyons en route to Quesnel, then to Jasper National Park for a day of leisure.

Then, to get to Lake Louise, you’ll travel via the scenic Icefields Parkway, where you can ride an Ice Explorer to the middle of Athabasca Glacier. Upon arriving at Lake Louise, you’ll have time to explore before heading to Banff and back to Vancouver via Kamloops.

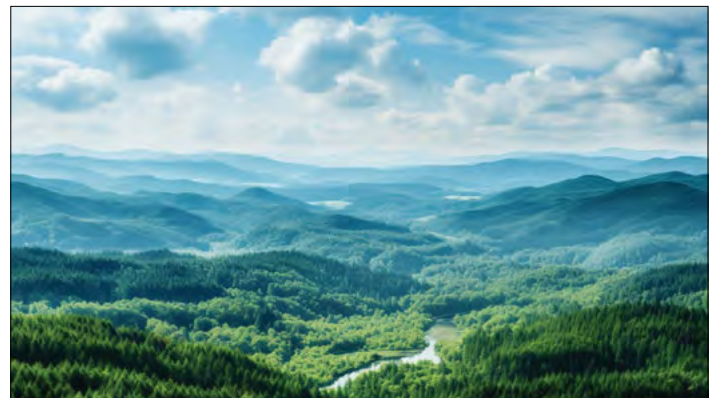
Australia

With a flight time between 16 and 21 hours from the U.S. and a huge area to see, a visit to Australia, Travel + Leisure’s 2020 Destination of the Year, doesn’t fit most vacation schedules – until you have no schedule, that is. In metropolitan Sydney, tour the iconic Opera House and then see it from another perspective on a harbor cruise. Walk across the Sydney Harbour Bridge, or climb to the apex of its steel arch if you have lots of energy and an extra \$350. Get up close and personal with Australia’s unique wildlife on Kangaroo Island’s nature reserve and see koalas, wallabies, kangaroos, fur seals, penguins, and kookaburras.

For marine wildlife, the Great Barrier Reef off the coast of Queensland in northeastern Australia is home to countless species of colorful fish, mollusks, starfish, turtles, dolphins, and sharks. Melbourne’s Great Ocean Road, at Australia’s southeastern tip, is the place to see rugged seashore, jagged cliffs, sandy beaches, and even the dense Otway rainforest. Don’t miss Brisbane, Queensland’s capital, set along its picturesque river and crossed by the Story Bridge.

Cruise the Yarra River in Melbourne for great views of the city’s landmarks and skyline. Seasons are opposite in the Southern Hemisphere, of course, so most travelers to the southern part of Australia time their visit during their summer, from November through March. ☺

Some of the travel information in this article came from Travel & Leisure Magazine. You can book any of these special trips with Senior Travel by calling Chris or Betty for reservations or information at 818-618-1211 (cell) or 321-978-5211 (office).





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