

A scenic landscape featuring a calm lake in the foreground, a dense forest of evergreen trees along the shoreline, and misty mountains in the background. The entire scene is overlaid with a soft teal-to-blue gradient, creating a serene and atmospheric mood.

# Workforce Housing

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Workforce housing is housing that is affordable and close to their jobs.

Workforce housing can refer to any form of housing:

- Single family or multi-family ownership
- Occupation of rental units
- Today we are going to discuss home ownership

## Workforce and workforce housing go hand in hand

- Must be a perfect union
- One has to take the lead

Where are we going to house our new workforce?



Big companies are taking notice and starting to change plans of expanding or relocating to rural areas across the country due to lack of housing for their workforce.

- In Columbus, Nebraska a 25 year old father of two was dead set on moving to this rural farming town for a job that he was offered with benefits with a \$500.00 signing bonus and a higher wage.
- After an unsuccessful search for housing with his wife he was forced to turn down the offer because they couldn't find anything livable or in their price range.
- He had to take a job making \$2.00 less an hour power washing farm equipment with no benefits for his family.

- In Iowa, Jason Luster the chief executive officer of QC Supply LLC, a farm equipment distributor to the swine and poultry industry, was unable to find a house in Schuyler, the town where the company's headquarters is located. His family had no choice but to stay behind in Huxley, some 200 miles away while he lived at the nearby Cobblestone Inn for 8 months before buying a farm house where he lives during the week.
- Mr. Luster said "his biggest challenge is finding housing for his workers who do not qualify for low-income housing but cannot afford an expensive home."
- There are not a lot of options for his workers who make anywhere from 40,000 to 100,000 a year.

On a local level.

- The dynamics of rural Georgia differs from area to area. Some areas are great for farming and industry and other parts bring in the tourists.
- Tourist destinations
- Investment Opportunities
- Service Workers



- Keeping our workforce in the county in which they live.

### **Gilmer County for example:**

- Top employers
- Pilgrims Pride: Poultry Industry - 290 out of the 800 plant employees live outside of Gilmer county
- Board of Education: Educators/Staff - 92 out 500 live outside of the county. Of that 92 , 72 of them are teachers that live outside of Gilmer county.
- Public Safety: Police officers, EMT, Firefighters - approximately 20% live out of the county
- Service Workers: Servers, Vineyards, Orchards, Restaurants

# Real Estate

- In Gilmer County we find that about 85% of home buyers are from out of town/state. With a high density being retirees, second home, and investors purchasing vacation type rental homes.
- It is becoming increasingly difficult to find a home for my buyers that are looking for moderate (workforce) housing.
- One was a young family that wanted to stay in Gilmer county but we couldn't find a house in their budget therefore forcing us to find their new home in a neighboring county, resulting in the wife leaving her job in Ellijay to work closer to home.
- The next example is having a house listed at 150,000 causing a bidding war and undue stress to the seller having to choose one family over another.



- What are the solutions?
- Nebraska recently granted \$7 million to rural communities, including Columbus, to build market-rate homes to help attract more workers.
- In Columbus, \$850,000 is proposed to go towards incentives for developers to build hundreds of rental units and single-family homes in varying price points through low-interest loans.
- Grants
- Tax credits
- Subsidies

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- Workforce housing serves the middle-income market, enabling employees vital to the local economy, such as educators and emergency service workers to live where they work. This benefits individuals, but also increases socioeconomic diversity in neighborhoods.
- Affordable housing really is the core of American history.