

Retire in Longview



Real East Texas Retirement: *Longview, Certified Retirement Community*

In 2007, the City of Longview was delighted to be recognized as Certified Retirement Community in the State of Texas. In a nutshell, that means Longview has been vetted as a community that offers opportunities and services for retirees, including everything from health care to transportation to housing and entertainment. As a recent retiree to Longview, I couldn't agree more.

During research for the certification process, members of Longview's Certified Retirement Committee would often say, "Wow, I didn't know we had that." Over and over again, committee members were pleased to discover hidden gems that had been taken for granted. In 2011, a group called SEC Planning confirmed those thoughts during a community assessment: Longview does indeed offer retirees many great opportunities. As the saying

goes, great things may be hidden in plain sight just waiting to be noticed. As such, the purpose of these "Retire in Longview" pages is to highlight just a few of Longview's hidden gems, as well as to tell the story of what makes Longview a great place to call home.

Did you know one of the biggest reasons people choose to retire in Longview is because they have family or friends that live here already? So, help share the secret. Encourage your friends and family to Retire in Longview. For more information about Longview, or to let us know about other hidden gems in the community, please visit our website at www.RetireinLongview.com.

Sincerely,
Betty Kirby, Certified Retirement Committee



Longview, Texas: Population 80,455

History of Longview:

Longview was founded in 1870 when O.H. Methvin deeded 100 acres of land to the Southern Pacific Railroad for the price of one dollar. Soon, the railroad arrived, and so did timber, cotton, and agricultural businesses. Later years saw an oil boom, industrial development, and a diversified economy. Since 1870, Longview has grown to become a regional hub for medical services, employment, shopping, restaurants, events, and entertainment. Learn more about the history of Longview by visiting the 100 Acres of Heritage displays located throughout downtown or check out the Gregg County Historical Museum.



Longview in Late 1800's

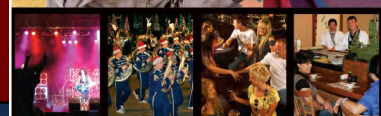
Downtown Longview has undergone a transformation. You can find shops, restaurants, events, and much more in the historic heart of Longview. Enjoy concerts, AlleyFest, ArtWarlk, Movies on the Plaza, Parades, Christmas events, a Farmer's Market, and much more.



Downtown LONGVIEW



A WHOLE NEW PLACE TO BE



DowntownLongview.com
Facebook.com/LongviewMainStreet

Retire in Longview

Drawn to Longview, Texas

Houston Art Patrons Retire to East Texas

Diane and Steve, age 59 and 63, had lived in Houston for 38 years. From their downtown high rise condo, they were in the middle of all Houston had to offer. They loved the museums that were just steps away from their home. Unfortunately, endless traffic was also right outside their door. **“We loved Houston, but I was done with all that traffic,”** says Diane.

As the couple neared retirement, they began searching for a location with a slower pace that still offered quality medical care, easy access to the arts, and other amenities. They visited Brenham and Waco and College Station, but they didn't find the right fit. They visited San Antonio and Fort Worth, but those cities seemed too large. And then, out of the blue, Diane discovered Longview. “I was researching online about an artist that I like, and I saw that there was a display in East Texas. The next thing you know, I am learning all about Longview. I told my husband, ‘We need to visit Longview.’”

During four visits to Longview, they shopped, bowled, saw a movie, attended church, and of course, learned about Longview's art scene. “Before we made a life-changing decision, we wanted to know about the place.” They found in Longview a small town atmosphere with cultural and artistic opportunity. “People were friendly in Houston, but everyone was VERY friendly here. In East Texas, people would start up conversations in the middle of the store.”

After three years of searching, the couple had finally found their retirement town. In 2010, Diane and Steve built their dream home. “I really love the neighborhood. If you want to



(above) Diane in front her newly constructed Longview home as the Bradford pear tree displays brilliant fall color

meet people, just work in the front yard a few minutes and soon all the neighbors will stop by to talk.”

Since moving to Longview, the couple has jumped right in. They became involved at First United Methodist Church. Steve joined AMBUCS civic club and helps build ramps for disabled residents. He's also taken an artistic welding class at Longview Museum of Fine Arts. Diane has become involved with her neighborhood and much more. She says her new friends are always inviting her to one activity after another.

Diane says, **“I was really excited to find an extensive arts community that was so easily accessible. For a town of its size, Longview really has a lot.** We've been to the East Texas Community Chorus, the Longview Symphony, and even a youth concert at a church, just to name a few. There are lots of free or nominally-priced events, which is a very good discovery.”

When asked what she likes about Longview, Diane listed less traffic than Houston, the beauty of the trees, and the friendliness of the people. When asked what she disliked most, she said, “I haven't found much to dislike yet.” ■

Arts!Longview and Beyond

ARTS!Longview: A consortium of groups that receive City arts grants. www.ArtsLongview.com.

Artsview Children's Theatre: Year-round performances for and by children. www.ArtsviewChildrensTheatre.com

East Texas Ballroom Dance Association: Free ballroom dance opportunities and lessons. www.LongviewDance.com

East Texas Symphonic Band: Community band with multiple concerts throughout the year. www.ETSymphonicBand.com

East Texas Music & Theatre Company: Stage for locals and professionals in music and theatre. [ww.OperaET.com](http://www.OperaET.com)

Gregg County Historical Museum: History displays, exhibits, lectures, oral history, and more. www.GreggHistorical.org



Longview Museum of Fine Arts: Paintings, sculpture, and mixed media. Various art classes held year round. www.LMFA.org

Longview Symphony Orchestra: An all-professional orchestra that brings world class music. www.LongviewSymphony.org

Longview Ballet Theatre: Professional ballet dancers perform with local talent as well. www.LongviewBallet.com

S.E. Belcher Chapel and Performance Center: Venue for nationally acclaimed shows and artists. www.BelcherCenter.com

More Opportunities: Longview World of Wonders, East Texas Community Chorus, Kilgore College Art Classes, Kilgore Community Concert Series, Texas Shakespeare Festival, and much more. Find links at www.RetireinLongview.com

Retire in Longview

Out of Africa & New England

The Hardings Journey to Longview

It's been an interesting journey for Jim and Joan Harding, a retired history teacher and nurse. **"Some people have had life like a plain cake. We've had a fruit cake with jalapenos"** says Joan of a path that has included New England, Africa, and now Longview, Texas.

The couple met in New Hampshire and married in 1964. In 1970, the Hardings moved to Kenya to work as missionaries for Rift Valley Academy, a Christian boarding school in Central Kenya. "Our time in Africa was wonderful. We loved working at the school and interacting with students from all over the world," Jim recalls. "Kenya really is beautiful." They raised their family while working at the school through 1993, with occasional breaks back to the United States.

It was during one of those breaks that the Hardings first experienced Longview. Prior to 1989, Joan says she had never even remotely considered living in Texas. Then, they heard about a short-term job opportunity working at LeTourneau University. They thought everything about the job sounded like a perfect fit, until they inquired about the school's location. "I thought the deal was squashed right there," recalls Jim. "All Joan could say was 'Texas? Texas? Not Texas!'"

During those two years in Longview though, the Hardings developed deep friendships at the university, their church, and throughout the community. According to Joan, "My friends here were so genuine. It was difficult to leave in 1991, not knowing that one day we would return for retirement."

The couple returned to Africa and later moved back to Rhode Island to help care for aging parents. In 2005, Joan's and Jim's mothers had both passed away, and the Hardings had a decision to make: where to retire?

With grandkids in three different states, friends in various places, and their mission's retirement facility in Florida, they felt pulled in multiple directions. So, the Hardings made a list comparing their top retirement choices: Pennsylvania, North



(Above) Jim and Joan with grandchildren Zeb and Zeke at the Longview Junction Train Depot playground

Carolina, Rhode Island, Florida, and Texas.

"We ranked the list according to cost of living, climate, housing, family, church, and friends. In the end, Longview came out on top." One of the things that helped Longview was the lack of significant snowfall. **"I was done with the snow," Joan said emphatically.** Longview's rare snowfall is much different than the many feet of snow they experienced in New England.

Back in Longview, Joan and Jim continued working and then fully retired in 2010. "Total retirement at first was a huge shock," says Joan, "We were accustomed to going 100 miles an hour and suddenly we stopped. It was a big change." Changing pace, they now love bringing their grandsons to the Longview Junction Train Depot to climb on the playground and watch the trains roll by. The Hardings are also active in the Longview community. Jim is a member of the Longview Race Relations Committee and has volunteered with the MultiCultural Festival. Joan volunteers at Beacon Hospice. They both are very involved with their church senior group. As part of their new retirement routine, Jim and Joan exercise four to five times each week at the Good Shepherd Institute of Healthy Living. "Joan and I did a Zumba class a few days ago, and we decided it was a little too *Zoom* for us," laughs Jim as he concedes that they would probably stick to the water aerobics that they love.

Jim, 69, and Joan, 68, said they chose Longview through prayer and careful consideration. So far, they say they've made a good decision. "Longview's a nice town, and we're happy to be here." **Share your story at www.RetireinLongview.com.** ■

Cost of Living Comparisons

88%

According to Sperling's Best Places, residents in Longview enjoy a cost of living that is approximately 88% of the national average. In other words, for every dollar it costs to live in the average U.S. city, it only costs 88 cents to live in Longview. Among the lower costs: utilities, housing, food, health care, and, of course, no state income tax. Plus, the cost of doing business is 77% of the national average, according to Moody's Analytics.

Retire in Longview

Community Resources *For the Active Adult*

INFOline of Gregg County

www.LongviewUnitedWay.org 903-236-9211

INFOline of Gregg County brings people and services together. A service of the Greater Longview United Way, INFOline helps individuals, families, and community members identify, understand, and access available social services. INFOline also creates a helpful resource guide available in print or online.

Area Agency on Aging

www.ETCOG.org 903-984-8641

Programs authorized by the Older Americans Act, including senior nutrition, home-delivered meals, transportation, benefit counseling, legal assistance, ombudsmen, and caregiver support. Administered by East Texas Council of Government.

Adult Protective Services for East Texas

www.dfps.state.tx.us 903-757-0588 or 800-252-5400

Investigates alleged abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elderly or disabled adults. Offers assistance for utilities, food, clothing, and medications for eligible elderly or disabled adults.

East Texas Aging and Disability Resource Center

www.ETXADRC.org 903-295-5922

Assists individuals, family members and caregivers. Streamlines access to wide range of aging and/or long term services and support. Serves as resource for information and referral.

Longview Transit, ParaTransit Service

www.LongviewTransit.com 903-753-2287

Longview Transit's ParaTransit Service offers curb-to-curb transportation within the City of Longview. Limited to qualified individuals unable to use regular fixed-route service.

GO BUS, Rural Transportation

www.ETCOG.org 800-590-3371

Administered by the East Texas Council of Government, GO BUS provides transportation for rural areas outside of Longview within a 14-county region.

Social Security Administration Longview

www.ssa.gov 903-295-5250

Administers social security programs, supplemental security income, cash benefits for retirement survivors or disabled who meet requirements and Medicare.

Meals on Wheels, Longview Community Ministries

www.LongviewCommunityMinistries.org 903-753-3561

Provides delivery of hot prepared food at noon, five days a week to elderly or disabled homebound residents.

Experience Works

www.ExperienceWorks.org 903-561-8131 x159

Experience Works provides part-time employment services and training to qualifying older Texans to upgrade their skills.

Longview Economic Development Corp - Job Listings

www.LongviewUSA.com 903-753-7878

Listing of various Longview-area job opportunities.

Workforce Solutions of East Texas

www.EastTexasWorkforce.org 903-758-1783

Recruitment and employment services for businesses and job seekers, veteran's services, career counseling, and more.

Good Shepherd Medical Center - ClassiCare

www.GSMC.org 903-315-2273

Offers adults age 50+ wide range of activities and events, group travel, exercise classes, monthly luncheons, health seminars, wellness screenings, discounts, and in-hospital benefits.

Longview Regional Medical Center - Senior Circle

www.LongviewRegional.com 903-232-3878

Offers adults age 50+ activities and events, discounts, exercise and wellness classes, monthly luncheons, in-hospital privileges, travel opportunities, and much more.

Kilgore College Continuing Education

www.Kilgore.edu 903-753-2642

Kilgore College provides life-long learning for adults in the community, with campuses in Kilgore and Longview. Variety of personal enrichment classes include painting, cake decorating, creative writing, photography, dog grooming, gunsmithing, landscaping, retirement planning, computer classes, and more.

Longview Public Library

www.LongviewLibrary.com

903-237-1350

The Longview Public Library offers traditional book collections and much more. The library has book clubs, PC and Mac computer classes, wifi, eBooks, eAudiobooks, large print books, and a Talking Book Program for the visually impaired. The Circles



of Success Bond Program provides assistance to seniors unable to come to the library. The genealogy and local history room has family history research materials.

Retire in Longview

Recreation & Leisure

Health and hobbies



Bike Rider on Paul Boorman Trail

City of Longview Parks and Recreation

Parks.LongviewTexas.gov

903-237-1270

There are more than 30 parks and trails across Longview. Recreation classes include Aikido, Belly Dance, Line Dance, Dog Obedience, Photography, and Keel Boat Sailing.

Green Street Recreation Center

903-237-1279

Offers adults ages 35+ activities such as line dancing, games, luncheons, computer classes, and volunteer opportunities.

Paula Martin Jones Recreation Center

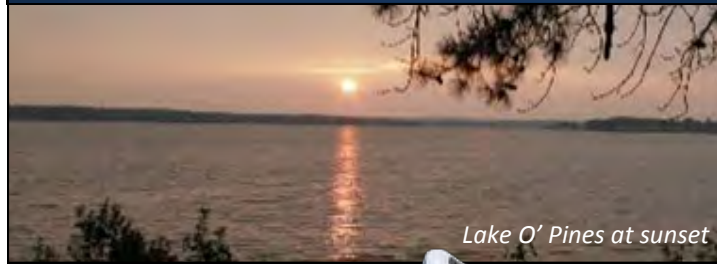
903-239-5500

Fitness facility with indoor salt-water pool, gym, exercise equipment, water aerobics, racquetball, zumba, and more.

Recreation Clubs, Civic Clubs, Golf, and More:

There are a lot of fitness, recreation, and civic clubs in East Texas. Just to name a few: Longview Running Club, Longview Bicycle Club, Longview Tennis Association, Longview Swim Club, Longview Yacht Club, East Texas Fly Fishers, Sportsman Bass Club, East Texas Rifle and Pistol Club, OMNI Club, Master Gardeners, Native Plant Society, Longview Bonsai Society, garden clubs, Lions Club, Kiwanis, AMBUCS, Rotary, Pilot Club, Junior League, Zonta and more. And there are golf courses, too. Find links and more info at www.RetireinLongview.com

Did you know: There are 25 lakes within 75 miles of Longview?



Lake O' Pines at sunset

All About Safety

Public Safety Resources

Longview Police

www.LongviewPolice.com

903-237-1199

The Longview Police Department (LPD) provides many public safety resources for resident involvement, including: Citizens Police Academy, Citizens on Patrol, Neighborhood Crime Watch, Disabled Parking Enforcement volunteers, and personal safety classes. LPD also uses administrative volunteers and volunteer reserve officers.

Emergency Notification And Weather Warning System

PSC.LongviewTexas.gov

903-237-1170

The City of Longview Public Safety Communications uses this system to send emergency notifications to Longview residents. Weather warnings are also available. Register online or call.

Gregg County Project LifeSaver

www.co.gregg.tx.us

903-236-8400

Coordinated by the Gregg County Sheriff's Office and the Longview Pilot Club, Project LifeSaver assists elderly individuals at risk of becoming lost. Participants wear a personalized wrist band with radio tracking technology. For more information, call 903-236-8400.



Longview Fire Department

Fire.LongviewTexas.gov

903-237-1210

The Longview Fire Department (LFD) does much more than just respond to fires. LFD coordinates emergency management, conducts fire prevention education, and also operates ambulance services for Longview. Firefighters are cross-trained as paramedics, and every fire engine is also fully equipped with medical supplies. So, if you dial 911 for a medical emergency, first responders may arrive on a fire truck.

Ambulance Subscription Program: Offered through the Longview Fire Department for \$70 annually, plan covers out-of-pocket ambulance expenses not covered by insurance.

File of Life: Free informational card enable medics to obtain a quick medical history of a patient. Contact LFD to sign up.

Smoke Detector Program: Thanks to community donations, LFD provides free smoke detectors to needy residents.

Retire in Longview



Senior Expo Survey Says *What Residents Said About Longview*

At the 2011 News-Journal Senior Expo event, the City of Longview asked 156 residents an open-ended question: *Why did you choose to Retire in Longview?*

1 Longview is Home. (51 of 156) More than any other response, people said they retired in Longview because it always was or has become *home*. Some said they were born here. Others came for work and stayed for good. Either way, the result was clear: Longview is the place they established roots. With national trends showing large numbers of people relocating to leave their hometown for retirement, it is significant that many Longview seniors chose to stay.

2 Longview has Friends & Family. (35 of 156) The second highest reason that people chose Longview also makes great sense: they had friends and family that lived here. For some it was the pull of the mighty “grandchildren magnet.” For others, it was the recommendation of friends. As they say, it all comes down to who you know.

3 Longview is the Friendly, Beautiful, Low-Cost-of-Living, Right-Sized, Excellent-Health-Care, Convenient, Tree-Filled, Best Town in Texas, Great Place to Live. No one person wrote all of those things on a single survey, but a lot of different people wrote several of those things.

Have your own reason? Share it at RetireinLongview.com



Like it!

As part of the survey mentioned above, residents were asked what they liked most about Longview:



1. Friendly, Caring, People
2. Things to do
3. Shopping
4. Right Size City
5. Trees and Scenery
6. Good Medical Care
7. Everything
8. Weather / Climate
9. Restaurants
10. Churches

Getting Connected

Stay in touch with your community

LongviewTexas.gov



Official website of the City of Longview. Information about City government, services, news, and events. Sign up for Email News and Updates. See pictures, watch Channel 5 videos, or connect to the City’s social media on Facebook and Twitter.

VisitLongviewTexas.com

Official website of the Convention and Visitor’s Bureau. Find events happening in Longview, or post one of your own if it is applicable. You can also “like” one of several social media pages, such as Facebook.com/VisitLongview. You can visit the Visitor’s Center at 410 N. Center St.

LongviewChamber.com

Longview Chamber of Commerce offers many resources, including news, events, relocation packets, social media, volunteer opportunities and more.

Senior Expo Event:

A one-day event for finding information about lots of community resources. Hosted by the Longview News-Journal, the next Senior Expo is September 22, 2012.

Volunteer!

Volunteer with local government, a nonprofit agencies, or start your own initiative. Learn about mentoring and City-related opportunities at Volunteer.LongviewTexas.gov. For a listing of nonprofit agencies, contact INFOLine of Gregg County at 903-236-9211 or www.LongviewUnitedWay.org.

