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Developers' plan: Reunite boomers with their schools Housing expected to lure alumni back to college towns.

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Growth in condominium and townhome developments is quickly becoming a national trend in college towns, driven by football programs and expanded academic opportunities for baby boomers.

For some people, a condominium near their alma mater or favorite college team is an occasional weekend residence. For baby boomers and retirees, living near a college campus brings academic and social opportunities.

The market for maintenance-free housing near college campuses includes private development and university-linked adult active learning communities.

In a survey by Campus Continuum, a Newton, Mass.-based company that develops university-linked communities, many respondents ages 55-75 said they would like to live on or near a college campus in their retirement years.

Trend hits home Gameday Centers LLC, which plans to build a condominium-hotel in downtown South Bend, has built in other college towns.

The 14-story Hall of Fame Gameday Center will have about 189 units and will be combined with a parking garage. Gameday President Brad Pager said the units are fully furnished and offer services similar to a hotel. When not in use, condo owners can include their unit in a rental program for temporary use and hotel space.

Meanwhile, a Chicago-based developer with local ties is eyeing other college towns for similar condo-hotel developments. Mike Brenan, developer of Waterford Estates Lodge, a 200-unit condo-hotel on Indiana 933 North, plans to take the concept he introduced here two years ago elsewhere.

How many places?

That's yet to be determined, but 30 to 35 projects are not out of the question, the 1971 Notre Dame graduate said. His company, Brenan Hospitality Management Group, which he operates with a son, Keith, is among just a handful of developers that have forged into condo-hotel construction.

"It's not as easy as it looks," said Brenan, a 30-year hospitality-industry veteran.

In January, the Brenans announced plans for a condo-hotel in East Lansing geared to Michigan State University fans. Units start at \$59,900.

The project is about four miles from the Michigan State campus. Waterford is roughly a mile from Notre Dame.

Brenan has a few other sites in mind, including State College, Pa., near Penn State University. It is still in early development, but he said he has dozens of reservations. There is also Utah State University.

Brenan thinks a condo-hotel also could be built near the University of Florida in Gainesville, Fla. But he hasn't determined if condo-hotels are the right concept for every college town.

Campus life

Although the Gameday centers have a sports theme, Pager said the condo-hotels are for everyone. He is seeing more older clients investing in other Gameday properties just to be in an urban environment and near a college.

One client in his 70s is moving to the Tallahassee Gameday Center from North Carolina, Page said. The retired professor has little interest in sports but is excited to be near the library and an academic environment, Pager said. He expects to see similar owners in South Bend. "There will be people who will live there and who will never go to a Notre Dame football game," he said.

Some colleges are sponsoring or partnering with developers on building college-linked communities. These university-linked communities are built either on or near campuses and offer residents special classes or programming. Residents also volunteer to teach classes or are part of mentoring programs, where they can pass their knowledge on to college students.

Medical services are offered in some of the communities, while others provide easy access to nearby hospitals and health-care facilities.

Of the 12 schools Notre Dame played during the regular 2006 football season, four have university-linked communities.

- The University of Michigan set aside land for a developer to build University Commons for faculty, staff and their spouses 55 and older. Residents can participate in lectures, concerts and other activities in the development.
- Penn State has The Village at Penn State, which offers free noncredit classes on campus and discounted rates at the university golf course and other facilities. Residents also get "priority access" to football and basketball games.
- Purdue University has University Place, which is affiliated with the university and offers educational and social activities.
- Stanford University has Hyatt Classic Residence, a retirement community for faculty and others

affiliated with the university.

There are also two non-university-affiliated communities.

- Michigan State University has Burcham Hills retirement community in East Lansing. It offers noncredit personal enrichment courses to residents and their families.
- Georgia Tech has The Georgia Tech Club in the nearby Echelon gated community. It offers residents access to a golf course, tennis facility, and spa and fitness facility. Although not owned by Georgia Tech, it is endorsed by the school's athletic and alumni associations.

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