



# THE ISLAND PACKET

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## It's pretty hard to beat Life on the lake

### Bluffton's Hampton Lake wins national award

By DON MCLLOUD

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**H**ampton Lake in Bluffton won a prestigious national award Monday, being named the Best Community with 151 Homes and Over in the country.

The lakefront community off U.S. 278 beat out developments from throughout the United States to receive the honor at the Best in American Living Awards ceremony, sponsored by the National Association of Home Builders' Design Committee and Professional Builder magazine.

The awards are presented to outstanding builders, architects, designers, developers, land planners and interior designers nationwide in 36 categories.

Paul Deffenbaugh, editorial director for Professional Builder, said past winners of the award include companies of excellent international reputation. "It's quite prestigious," he said. "The kind of company Hampton Lake is keeping is very good."

Deffenbaugh said the judges look at a variety of criteria, including the quality of the land development, consideration of the environment, amenities and proximity to parkland.

The winner also must show success in marketing and sales. "If it doesn't sell, it doesn't win," he said.

Despite a slow economy, Hampton Lake has sold 450 properties since 2006, according to Gerrit Albert, president of Hampton Lake.

Albert, who is in Las Vegas at the International Builders' Show, said the other main contributing factor to the development's success is its amenities. The developer, Reed Development of Bluffton, conducted focus groups to determine what people wanted in a community and what they didn't want.

Because of those responses, Albert said Hampton Lake has property owners whose ages vary. "The majority of our owners are baby boomers, but we appeal to people in their 30s and 40s as well," he said.

The big draw is the Lakeside Village, built around a 165-acre freshwater lake. Amenities



Special to the Packet

**Lakeside Village at Hampton Lake, as seen in this aerial photo, is one of the big attractions at the Bluffton community, which won a Best in American Living Award.**

include a 340-acre nature preserve with nine miles of nature trails, a waterfront bar and grill, general store, nature center, spa and fitness center, resort-style pools, a boathouse and beach at the lake, an overnight camping island, a dog park and golf course. Tennis courts are being built.

"All of our amenities are clustered together," Albert said. "There's something to do for everyone."

Albert said he considered the award a testament to quality development occurring in the area, some of it as a continuation of the early development on Hilton Head Island by brothers Charles and Joe Fraser. Fraser Construction of Bluffton has done much of the major facilities construction in Hampton Lake, and John Reed worked with Fraser before forming his own development company.

"The legacy really does live on today," Albert said.

Other major players in Hampton Lake's development are Malphrus Construction of Hilton Head, PBG of Hardeeville and Wood+Partners of Hilton Head.

#### OTHER LOCAL WINNERS

Other local winners of the 25th Annual Best in American Living Awards, sponsored by the National Association of Home Builders and Professional Builder magazine, are:

- Wilson's Landing at Palmetto Bluff won Best Community Facility (151 Units and Over). Hampton Lake's Lakeside Village won the same award last year. Both facilities were built by Fraser Construction of Bluffton.

- Wayne Windham Architect, P.A., of Bluffton won the 2008 Home of the Year award for the design of a custom home in Palmetto Bluff. The firm also received an award for the Best One-of-a-Kind Home in the 4,000- to 6,500-square-foot category and the Best in Region Award.

- Erickson Home by Noro Co. of Port Royal won Best Single Family Detached Home (1,800 Square Feet and Below).