

***From the Chicago Tribune
dated August 25, 1991:***

Racine, Wis., has been working to revitalize its downtown and waterfront areas for almost a decade. And with the opening this year of the newest piece in the plans, the 72-unit Lakeshore Towers condominiums, the city has shown it can draw upscale buyers to its lakefront.

And many of those buyers are coming from Chicago and its northern suburbs.

"We're a suburb of Chicago, not a suburb of Milwaukee," said Warren Olsen, a principal in Capstone Development Corp., builder of Lakeshore Towers. "All you have to do is look in the harbor. With 1,400 slips, about 90 percent of them are Chicago and northern Illinois boats."

Olsen said that the project has seen as many as 70 groups coming through per weekend from south of the Illinois-Wisconsin border.

About half of Lakeshore Towers condo owners are from Illinois and the other half are Racine natives, Olsen said. And the owners are split about 50-50 among those for whom their condo is a primary residence and those for whom it is a second home, he said.

Each floor has nine units, with the eighth floor containing nine two-story penthouses. The lowest priced two-bedroom, two-bath, 1,500-square-foot units start at \$167,000 and the penthouses can go for \$445,000 or more.

Lakeshore Towers directly overlooks Racine's new harbor and 900-slip Reefpoint Marina, part of a lakefront redevelopment effort in the city

that includes a festival grounds next door to the condominium tower.

Bob Gibson, executive director of the Downtown Racine Development Corp., said that \$18 million in local development funds coupled with \$6 million in state and federal monies has been used to fund the public portion of the redevelopment.

Private developers have added to public improvements with condos, townhouses at Gaslight Pointe and a new headquarters campus for J I Case Co. Gibson estimates the private investment has reached more than \$110 million.

"We've never had a complete (demolition) of the downtown like some other cities. Racine never hit bottom, although it has been suffering downtown problems like everybody else," Olsen said.

Lakeshore Towers itself is on city redevelopment land. Developers negotiated a contract with the city that will allow them to pay for the parcel out of their profits from the project when sales are concluded. So far, 50 units have been sold, including 10 in the last two weeks.

The project also includes 53 boat slips being sold separately. Olsen said a marketing study done for the developers predicted that many of the condominium buyers would be drawn because of the boat slips, but that has not been the case.

"For the slip buyers, their boat is their condo, I guess," Olsen said.