

## Service's niche is relocation

Veterans of many job-related moves act as guides for prospective transplants



Peter and Leigh Eckle plan tours of the Triangle that are matched to a business executive's interests and lifestyle.

By **REBECCA ROUSSELL**, Staff Writer

Whether to take a job or not often comes down to three things: the challenge, pay and location. Location as in: Will your family want to live in whatever town you're thinking about plopping them down in?

To get a 'Yes' to that question, some companies turn to Peter Eckle and his wife, Leigh, owners of Associate Arrangements.

The Eckles and their staff of five provide customized relocation services for companies that are trying to hire executives. Among their clients are Network Appliance, Cisco Systems, Closure Medical, R.H. Donnelley and Duke University. For anywhere from \$1,200 to \$1,500 per tour, the Eckles can plan an entire weekend tour of the Triangle.

They started the business about three years ago. Eckle had spent 30 years traveling for work as an executive vice president for Reichhold in RTP and a vice president at Ashland Specialty Chemical in Dublin, Ohio.

Twelve moves -- to New Jersey, Belgium and to and from the Triangle -- have made Eckle and his wife something of an authority on relocation. "One of the last times [we] moved from the Triangle, we had a chance to experience a personalized service like this in Cleveland," Peter Eckle said. "We thought this would be a good service for companies" in the Triangle.

Raleigh-based Closure Medical was one of their first clients.

"It was the kind of human touch that companies can't provide," said Michael Hoban, Closure's vice president of human resources.

Before Associate Arrangements, Hoban said, different employees in human resources would either drive prospective hires around or refer them to area real estate agents.

"My job is inside these walls," Hoban said, "[and] they are the pros in the community."

Closure Medical has used the Eckles' service for about 10 employees, including Dan Pelak, the company's chief executive.

Three years ago, Pelak and his wife, Linda, used the service when he was considering a move from Minneapolis. Pelak said they toured neighborhoods in North Raleigh, saw the malls and downtown Raleigh and different high schools for their daughter.

"They do a good job and they are great ambassadors for the whole area," Pelak said.

In September, Pelak begins his new job as chief executive at Interventional Rhythm Management in RTP. He plans to use the Eckles when recruiting at his new company.

Eckle or a member of his staff talks to the perspective hire to find out their interests and concerns before developing an itinerary.

An art lover would be taken to the N.C. Museum of Art and other galleries. Golfers who want to practice their swing or take lessons would be shown Knights Play Golf Center in Apex. For those die-hard shopaholics, trips to Triangle Town Center, The Streets at Southpoint in Durham or Cameron Village satisfy the need to spend money.

Tours are typically on the weekend, and some of the main points of interest are restaurants, shopping and schools.

Singles -- both men and women -- look for communities with other young professionals, said Leigh Eckle.

"If they have children, education is the No. 1 factor," she said.

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## **ASSOCIATE ARRANGEMENTS**

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### WEB SITE:

[www.associatearrangements.com](http://www.associatearrangements.com).

For subscribers only. Provides detailed listings of shopping areas, restaurants, health care and local tax information.

ELSEWHERE: Real estate agents often provide touring and relocation information, as does the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce. Other relocation companies focus more on helping people with their move once they're hired. Temporary Living Co. in Raleigh provides furnished short- and long-term living arrangements for potential hires.

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