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The Mackle brothers practically invented the Florida land sales business. Now, even though profits are lagging, there's a new Mackle at the helm — with the old Mackle optimism.

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# Deltona says it's back—stronger than ever

By Erik Calonius  
staff writer

**T**he October 31, 1955 issue of *Life* magazine, offered full-color advertisements for the Pontiac Strato-Streak V-8 with hydromatic transmission and candy-pink refrigerators by Frigidaire. The Campbell's Kids were selling soup, Peter Lorre was pushing table wine and Arrow offered dress shirts for \$3.95 each.

Near the back of the magazine was a slim vertical ad in black and white. Although it may have been missed by millions of readers, its impact has outlived Lorre, The Campbell's Kids and even the V-8. It read:

OWN YOUR HOME  
IN FLORIDA for \$350 down.  
Total price \$4,950 . . .  
includes house and lot.  
It's Florida's biggest  
retirement home value!

In Miami, Frank Mackle Jr. and his brothers, Robert and Elliott, eagerly awaited the results of the ad. The three young men were experienced builders who had advertised their products locally in the past. This was their first gamble in the national marketplace.

It didn't take long for the first replies to trickle in. The trickle became a stream. Soon the mailman — "mad and sweating" — was delivering bag after bag of mail. In all, more than 18,000 people requested information about the brothers' retirement homes.

The response seemed too good to be true. It was.

Following up on the 18,000 leads, the brothers found that most of the respondents were still several years away from retirement. Only 127 could be sold houses immediately. That left about 17,800 unsold customers, all of whom had expressed a desire to retire eventually to Florida. "We've got to sell them *something!*" Frank Mackle Jr., remembers thinking at that time.

Suddenly, it came to him. They'd sell the customers land *now*, years before retirement, at an irresistible \$10 down. Payments on the land would be made in installments, the last of which would coincide with the day the buyer retired. On the day he retired, the customer would own his lot free and clear. *Then*, Frank Mackle reasoned, the brothers would offer to build a house on it. It

Frank Mackle Jr., the 64-year-old Deltona chairman, with his son Frank Mackle III, was named Deltona president in 1979.