

Tellico tour

Discovery Package gives visitors glimpse at Village life
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Touring Tellico Village

Discovery Package gives visitors insight into community life

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Tellico Village has about 7,000 full-time residents and continues to add more through the Property Owners Association Discovery Package tour, which provides visitors an opportunity to become familiar with the area from volunteer Villager tour guides, and the tour has, in turn, created demand from surrounding retirement communities like Fairfield Glade Community Club for insight into how the Village has become successful over the years.

Beth Kuberka, Tellico Village Property Owners Association marketing manager, is the contact for the beginning processes of taking either the Discovery Package tour, which is a two-day, three-night tour, or the day trip

ON THE COVER

Joe Bogardus, Tellico Village resident, gives Mary Jo Paige, director of marketing and events for Fairfield Glade Community Club, a tour of the Village on Aug. 11 as part of a Property Owners Association Discovery Package tour.

tour. The package remains popular among visitors, costing between \$230-\$330 per tour, Kuberka said.

On Aug. 11, Mary Jo Paige, director of marketing and events for Fairfield Glade Community Club, toured Tellico Village with volunteer Villager guide, Joe Bogardus, to strategize Fairfield Glade.

"I'm just trying to get some information to understand how communication is evolving for retirement communities in this area as well as our area too," Paige said. "We were talking about just the fact that if you're able to draw people into Tennessee, it's a positive thing. I'd like them to come to Fairfield Glade, but I'm not gonna get all the people over there. If they want big water like this, and they want to be by



Joe Bogardus, Tellico Village resident, volunteers as a guide to show possible incoming residents how much he enjoys the Village as part of a recent Property Owners Association Discovery Package tour.

Knoxville, you guys have it all over us."

The package tour includes 50 volunteer Villager tour guides. Thirty are land guides, and 20 guide boat tours. Tours typically begin at 10 a.m. and end at about 4 p.m.

The tour, which lasted about 1 1/2 hours, began at the Tanasi Golf Course club-

house, where Bogardus spoke about the national advertising campaign that has generated many resident leads to disperse among the five Realtors in the POA's partner Realtor program, who also happen to be Village residents. From Paige's point of view, having enthusiastic residents serve as tour guides is a more conductive

environment toward enticing visitors into buying property than having a salesperson market the community.

Bogardus said that having Villagers tour possible buyers is important because they can ask the hard-hitting questions, but at the same time, the tour guides cannot discuss pricing on available lots. After the tour is completed, if the resident lead would like to look into buying, they are set up with a partner Realtor.

"You know what I think is really nice is that you have people like yourself, residents, touring guests because, in my opinion, that's far more credible than having like a sales person go out with them," Paige said. "You feel like you're getting sold then."

Bogardus said the POA also offers both on-site and off-site nightly stays so that visitors can choose whether to stay at a home in the Village or at the Holiday Inn and Express or Hampton Inn in Lenoir City, which are the partnering hotels that give the POA discount rates.

Tour guides drive possible buyers from Tanasi to the southern end of the Village, visiting the Yacht Club, recreational facilities, The Public Library at Tellico Village, the Toqua Golf Course clubhouse, assisted living facilities and various neighborhoods as part of the land portion of the tour.

Bogardus said tours typically include a boating tour as well, which comes after the land tour and lunch. After the boat tour, visitors may speak with a Realtor, he said.

During their stay, tour guests may choose to golf, which adds cost to the tour, but are also given a dinner certificate for two at the Yacht Club and three-day passes to recreational facilities.

"They can play tennis, play pickleball," Bogardus said. "They can go into our swimming pools, outside, inside. They can take part in our classes and all of that."

Throughout the tour, Bogardus sells what he believes are the best parts of living in Tellico Village. He said the Village is 5,000 square acres with 6,700 buildable lots, 3,700 of which already have homes on them. The community stretches nine miles along Tellico Lake, which is 33 miles long and 90 feet at its deepest, Bogardus said.

"The good thing about Tellico Lake is that through various rivers and lock systems, you can wind up in the Gulf of Mexico, and then you can precede around

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the Florida Peninsula down through the Great Lakes to another series of locks and rivers and canals, and you can wind up right back here," Bogardus said. "That's called the Great Loop."

He went into more detail about how the lake is not only attractive to fishermen and tournaments, but a tourist attraction to benefit the population through recreation, boating and swimming.

Tellico Village has seven neighborhoods, one of which is Kahite in Monroe County. Bogardus' tour stopped at the end of the southernmost part of the Loudon County line in Tellico Village, but he said in detail how to get to Kahite from that point.

"It's about 15 minutes from the southern part of the Village," Bogardus said. "The Kahite neighborhood is a very close-knit neighborhood. There are about 330 households there. They have great mountain views, and there tends to be a few more lakeside properties available than there are here in the Loudon County section of the Village."

As part of giving a tour, Bogardus tells the tour guests how he and his wife became residents in the Village. Bogardus moved to the Village seven years ago from Chicago. He had previously promised his wife that they would move to Florida for retirement, but due to property values going "nuts" and the hurricanes striking, they chose to visit Tennessee.

The couple found out about the Village through a Live South show in Chicago in January of 2007, and while driving in the area on Feb. 23 of that year, they were forced to use their air conditioner due to 76 degree weather. He was speaking with his son at the time, who was in 19-degree weather in Chicago.

"It seemed like a no-brainer," Bogardus said. "We take great pride in being a resident-run community. We are not dependent on a developer or property management firm to improve or

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Joe Bogardus
Discovery Package guide

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Bogardus said he makes sure to inform guests that the Village is not age limited but is an "active adult community," which shocked Paige because when she worked with a retirement community in Florida, it was taboo to refer to their community as an "active adult community" unless there were age restrictions.

Paige said being able to have various ages in the community was a good thing, but in her experience the retirees want to give back to the community more. Bogardus said the volunteerism in Tellico Village is "off the charts," and he tells guests about those opportunities with different organizations in the Village during the tours.

Bogardus said he stresses "Tennessee's superior value" as well as costs for HOA memberships, golf and recreational facility memberships, and sewer and water bills. Paige said Bogardus definitely displayed his love of the Village, which impressed her.

She asked if people volunteering to be tour guides were screened, and he responded by saying, "The people who are involved as volunteer tour guides are all people who really are enthusiastic about living here."