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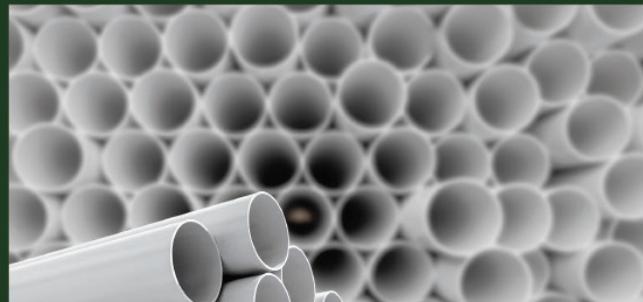
Magazine

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 MAGAZINE

**JANUARY 2026 ISSUE**

Warm winter greetings to our Tellico Village neighbors! As we step into a new year, January feels like the perfect moment to reflect on the connections that make our community so special—and to look ahead with optimism.

This issue highlights just how vibrant Tellico Village continues to be, even in the quieter winter months. From Bluestem Hollow to the Monroe County side of Tellico Village, our footprint keeps growing, and with it, our sense of shared purpose and pride. It's exciting to see collaboration across counties and community engagement.

We also want to showcase that Recreation and connection remain at the heart of Tellico Village life. Pickleball continues to thrive, welcoming both seasoned players and newcomers who discover quickly that the courts are as social as they are competitive. The RV Roadrunners Club reminds us that adventure doesn't stop at our gates—our residents bring back stories, friendships, and experiences that enrich us all.

Opportunities such as the Loudon Alive Grant, support projects that enhance the quality of life throughout our region. And, we extend our sincere appreciation to the Tellico Village Volunteer Fire Department. Their dedication and service—especially during the winter season—provide peace of mind to every resident.

Thank you for being part of what makes Tellico Village such a remarkable place to call home. Wishing you a healthy, happy, and warm start to 2026.

*Kathy Hartman*  
 Kathy Hartman, General Manager

**On the Cover:** Tellico Grains Bakery

*Photo courtesy of Visit Monroe TN, Monroe County Tourism*

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# Where community grows

Bluestem Hollow takes root in Greenback

Nestled in picturesque Greenback, Bluestem Hollow provides everything needed for an exciting outing for tourists and East Tennesseans alike. The beef cattle farm and family destination, located at 7085 Morganton Road, features a farm-to-table cafe, marketplace full of locally sourced products and a slew of outdoor activity options, making it the perfect escape for visitors of all ages.

Inspired by the little and big bluestem grass native to Tennessee, owners Christopher and Shona Burger first opened Bluestem Hollow to the public in March 2024 after years of cultivating the property into a productive piece of farmland – a loving yet arduous endeavor.

“The owners are very passionate about regenerative agriculture, the soil, feeding the community and native plants,” explained Jenn Barry, store manager and marketing director at Bluestem Hollow. “The hollow – or low land where



the market is located – is an especially challenging area, you have to love it and cultivate it properly.”

After tending the land, the Burgers launched Bluestem Hollow’s farm store as a means of selling the property’s grass-fed beef, pasture-raised eggs and other specialty prod-

**See BLUESTEM on Page 7**

# A Place to Breathe

## Monroe County's Growing Appeal

**R**ich with Appalachian beauty, Monroe County combines tranquility with a never-ending opportunity for outdoor activities, making it an ideal destination for anyone seeking a fulfilling day trip. In fact, the picturesque county, which is home to the Tellico Village neighborhood Kahite, attracts tourists from all over who are seeking a calmer means of experiencing East Tennessee.

“Monroe County offers something rare: the beauty of the Unicoi Mountains without the crowds that come with the Smokies,” explained Blaina Best, Monroe County Director of Tourism. “While many visitors assume all mountain travel means Gatlinburg or Pigeon Forge, Monroe County delivers a more authentic, uncrowded Appalachian experience.”

A unique blend of world-class natural assets and charming small towns, abundant history and genuine hospitality, Monroe County is increasingly being recognized as much more than just “a pass-through destination,” Best said.

“Many visitors quickly realize there is more than

enough here to build a full vacation around,” she said. “We offer space to breathe, room to explore and experiences that feel both timeless and fresh.”

For example, the Cherokee National Forest – the largest tract of public land in Tennessee spanning more than 660,000 acres in the Southern Appalachian Mountains, offers exceptional hiking while the Tellico River, Tellico Lake and Little Tennessee River provide ample fishing and paddling adventures. The county also has some of the best scenic driving in the Southeast, Best said, thanks to Cherokee Skyway, the famous 43-mile national byway connecting Tellico Plains and Robbinsville, N.C.

“Monroe County traditionally attracts outdoor enthusiasts, road trippers, couples seeking a peaceful getaway and families looking for authentic small-town experiences,” she said. “We see strong interest from hikers, motorcyclists, cyclists, paddlers, anglers and travelers exploring the Appalachian region.”

**See MONROE on Page 7**



**Bluestem**  
From page 5

ucts made in its onsite commercial kitchen. This includes organic coffees, local artisan goods such as sourdough bread and jams/jellies, Cruze Farm milk, Sweetwater Valley cheese and even tallow creams.

In March 2025, Bluestem Hollow expanded their operations by adding a farm-to-table cafe, one of the only certified seed oil-free restaurants in the area.

“We are proud to offer a healthier option for breakfast/lunch and a cozy meeting place for the community to come together,” Barry said.

In addition to Bluestem Hollow’s market and cafe, the property allows visitors to explore its garden, walking trails, natural playground and blooming house, all of which are open to the public and free for all to enjoy.

“A perfect morning would be to grab a latte and a pastry baked on premise, take up residence on the porch and watch the kids play on our natural playground,” Barry said. “There are also many things to explore on our walking trails, and we have some signage up for points of interest.”

Tours of the property are available as well, which includes hands-on instruction of how to make the cafe’s most popular dishes. Barry said that the farm’s friendly animals also make Bluestem Hollow an ideal field trip for homeschooled and public school children, with bags of treats available at the market for only \$3.



“We have three of my very favorite co-workers – Vinny, Curly and Dinky – our resident donkeys who are always ready for a pet,” said Barry. “We also have about 500 chickens, a couple of geese and guinea hens.”

Bluestem Hollow also holds seasonal fairs and plans to open a new restaurant in March, Barry said.

“Coming here is an experience,” she emphasized. “We love our customers and hope to continue to be a trusted one-stop shop for our community, offering everything you need without going to the big box stores.”

*For more information about Bluestem Hollow, visit [bluestemhollow.com](http://bluestemhollow.com).*



**Monroe**  
From page 6

The county also holds several unique festivals each year, including the Blooms, Bluegrass & BBQ Festival in Sweetwater, the Tellico Trout Festival in Tellico Plains, Christmas on the Square in Madisonville, and the Cherochala Skyway Festival in Tellico Plains.

“We are always actively developing new experiences and thematic campaigns highlighting waterfalls, agritourism and scenic driving,” Best said, noting new art trails, expanded cycling opportunities and even a murders and mysteries route. “These initiatives are designed to encourage longer stays and repeat visitation.”

Most importantly, Best said, history and heritage are central to Monroe County’s identity.

“From the Sequoyah Birthplace Museum, Fort Loudoun Historic Park, and Unicoi Turnpike to Cherokee and early Appalachian settlements, visitors can truly step back in time,” she said. “This history blends naturally with outdoor recreation allowing exploration through hiking ancient trade routes, paddling historic rivers, or driving scenic byways that have connected travelers for centuries. Outdoor recreation is not just an activity here; it is woven into the cultural identity of the county.”

For first-time visitors, Best especially recommends checking out the Lost Sea Adventure in Sweetwater, which is the country’s largest underground lake. There are also many local cafes, barbecue joints and boutiques throughout Tellico Plains, Madisonville,

Vonore and Sweetwater.

“What I love most about Monroe County is the balance,” she added. “We have breathtaking landscapes paired with genuine small-town warmth... You can hike a mountain trail in the morning, explore history in the afternoon, and enjoy a peaceful dinner by the water in the evening. If you are bored in Monroe County, you have not fallen in love with the place like I have.”

*To find out more about all that Monroe County has to offer, check out [visitmonroetn.com](http://visitmonroetn.com).*

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# PICKLEBALL PARADISE!

## Tellico Village Leads the Charge

Widely recognized as the fastest growing sport in America, pickleball has surged in popularity over the last few years, especially in Tellico Village. However, according to Tellico Village Pickleball Club President Kevin Land, the area's love of the sport dates all the way back to the early 2000s.

"A dozen or so villagers would play on a single tennis court with additional markings for the boundaries," explained Land. "The Tellico Village Pickleball Club was soon formed in 2004 as a social organization for promotion of the game here in the village by co-founders Mike Mitchell and Bob Cherry."

The club then worked with the Tellico Village POA Parks and Recreation Department to build eight pickleball courts at the Wellness Center in 2014. Yet the growth and interest in the sport only continued, Land said, ultimately leading to four additional covered courts at the Wellness Center, along with four more at Kahite.

"There's been quite a bit of growth in the last 25 years,"

said Land, noting that the club currently has a membership of over 1,000. "We add new members all the time, with 34 joining in the last six weeks alone."

For Land, this booming growth can be attributed to pickleball's many physical and mental health benefits.

"I find the game improves my balance and agility because I can share that when I am away from it for a while, it takes me a bit to get back in the groove," he said. "I also find it reduces stress and being a social game, it brings a healthy interaction that can make my day and that's a good thing!"

The sport also gives players the opportunity to visit and interact with old and new friends.

"Pickleball is one of the most social sports out there," said Land. "Games are fast and you rotate in and out, leaving time to talk to and laugh with the people there. It's friendly and pretty easygoing."

To join, all you need is a Tellico Village Parks and Recreation membership. Land said that the pickleball club's

annual fee of \$15 provides access to dedicated court times with players at your same skill level, as well as sessions with players at the next skill level. While balls are available for use at each session, ball machines can also be reserved at open sessions to work on playing skills.

“One of the best offerings of the club is the ability to walk on the courts and know you will be able to meet and play with folks at a similar skill level or maybe a level up to help improve your game,” he said, adding that the club uses the International Pickleball Teaching Professional Association (IPTPA) rating system to determine a player’s skill level. “Our members also have free access to weekly ‘Skills and Drills’ training sessions from March through October where they work on their game, learn new strategies and progress to the next skill level if they so desire.”

This means that you don’t need to be experienced in pickleball to join the club. In fact, Land said that the majority of the club’s new members are just getting started in the sport. For this reason, orientation sessions are held twice a month from March through November, enabling new players to get out on the court, learn the rules of the game and undergo their initial skill evaluation.

“After orientation and joining the club, members can just show up and begin playing and players there will help them with the mechanics and how to rotate in,” Land said. “But if a new member is not comfortable just showing up, our club Ambassadors are again available to help further orientate new members at set times in the week.”

While the Tellico Village Pickleball Club mainly meets on the courts, several social gatherings are also planned throughout

the year to give members a chance to meet outside of typical playing sessions. A tournament is held each year as well, in which the club partners with a charitable organization to support with 50 percent of the event’s proceeds.

For example, the tournament this year, set for April 18-19, will benefit the Special Olympics of Tennessee.

“The Pickleball Club gives back to our community,” said Land, noting that the annual tournament has resulted in over \$65,000 in donations over the last four years. “Last year we also raised money for the Loudon County Sheriff’s Benevolent Fund and the Adopt-A-Class educational charity in support of our local schools. And speaking of schools, club volunteers organized sessions with the local middle school and high school to teach the game to students and their efforts spurred the formation of the Loudon High School Pickleball Club.”

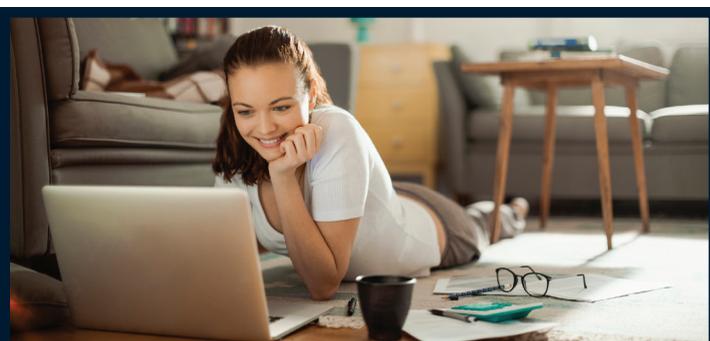
This focus on community is one of the aspects of the club that Land finds most admirable.

“The Tellico Village Pickleball Club is an amazing organization made up of friendly people and incredible volunteers,” he said. “The growth of the sport here in the village over the last 25 years or so took the efforts of many residents.”

To recognize their hard work, Land said the pickleball club has decided to start honoring these volunteers, along with long-term club sponsors, with a new Legacy Walk initiative.

“Their names are now etched in bricks in front of the pickleball pavilion and their contributions listed on our website to recognize their efforts in laying the foundation for our club and our game here in Tellico Village,” he said.

*For more information about getting involved with the Tellico Village Pickleball Club, visit [tvpbc-gameon.org](http://tvpbc-gameon.org).*



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# Life's journey

The journey from stay-at-home mom to health insurance agent was a quick one for Sarah Aguilar — once she realized first-hand how helpful and necessary the work could be.

“My husband and I, just like most people, had health insurance but we didn’t know how it worked or what our network included,” the Loudon County resident recalled of attempting to navigate her husband’s work-provided policy several years ago.

While specific doctors were in their network, unbeknownst to Aguilar, the hospital where those doctors performed their procedures was not.

“My insurance never mentioned anything, and I would have gone to that hospital and been responsible for my care with out-of-network benefits, which essentially would have meant I would have paid full price for everything,” she added.

A fellow church member who was also a health insurance agent offered to “walk me through very crucial steps,” including how to change providers, and “was incredibly helpful,” she said.

It not only made a huge difference to her personally, Aguilar also immediately recognized a potential career in which she could “be that for somebody else.”

Considering working outside the home had already been peripherally considered, as her husband’s job is government funded.

“There’s been several times throughout the years that we thought he would lose his job due to the contract ending, so I thought it would be a really great opportunity for me to have some side income [just in case] so that we wouldn’t have to worry [about potential time gaps] and we would still be okay financially.”

It was also important that a job would not interfere with her primary role as a homeschooling mom of six.

Realizing the position would allow her to work from home, so she could continue homeschooling “and be present for all [the children’s] appointments, co-ops and everything else they have going on,” re-

**See AGUILAR on Page 18**



# Small, mighty, & well-trained

The small yet mighty and well-trained Tellico Village Volunteer Fire Department helps fellow residents cope with what might be “their worst days,” notes Assistant Fire Chief Bill Ballinger.

“These are people who give freely of their time, day in and day out, in a very meaningful way for the good of the community,” he said. “The people they help, whether that be a fire or medical call, are often strangers that they have never met, and will never see again.”

Yet, “their commitment is to help others when they are having their worst day no matter who they are or why they are having that ‘worst’ day,” he continued. “We walk into chaos and try to give people hope that tomorrow will come, and it will be better than what they are feeling in the present

by helping them and their family through the immediate.”

TVVFD, which recently celebrated its 25th anniversary, has 54 current members — 11 of which are associate members who support the department with finances and various trainings, including CPR, Automated External Defibrillator use and Stop the Bleed classes — while 43 operational members respond to calls.

Members “come from a large variety of professions, and include both retirees and those still working full and/or part time,” said Ballinger. “Backgrounds include nurses, retired firefighters/paramedics, military, IT professionals, self-em-

See FIRE DEPARTMENT on Page 18



Photo submitted

Tellico Village Volunteer Fire Department members, from left, Kathy Gibson, Sandy Fox, Diane Doliana, Shannon Harlan, Mari Madden, Crystal Gibbons and Linda Jumer are pictured with the department's 2016 Pierce Dash pumper truck.



# Life on the Road, Together

Founded in 1995, the Tellico Roadrunners RV Club is made up of about 130 Tellico Village residents who own recreational vehicles and possess a passion for traveling, camping and meeting likeminded individuals.

Michael Spees, Tellico Roadrunners RV Club President, said rallies – or monthly camping outings – are held each month, typically from March through November, to destinations across the United States.

“We can’t camp throughout the year due to weather, so we try to start in March, if we can get anybody to go,” said Spees.

While Spees and his wife, who first got involved with the club about four years ago, have regularly organized March trips to Myrtle Beach, this year’s first rally will take place in April.

“This year, it seems like people are waiting a little bit later and we try to do what the members want to do,” Spees said. “So we do some long-distance trips and we also have local outings.”

The rally in April, for instance, will take place at Raccoon Mountain Caverns and Campground in Chattanooga. In May, the club then plans to have its annual Kentucky Derby-themed trip to Bean Pot Campground in Crossville.

“This is our first big one of the year and it’s always held during Kentucky Derby weekend – the first weekend in May,” said Spees, noting that the outing usually brings about 30 club members together. “We watch the derby and we play derby games and we have our own little horse race at the campground.”

Last year, Spees said, the campground owners even got involved in the festivities.

“They’re a younger couple, and those folks are just unbelievable,” he said. “They kept encouraging us to have rallies and actually provided us all with a full barbecue pork dinner; it was wonderful.”

After the Kentucky Derby rally, the group currently has trips planned for Franklin, N.C. in June and a three-week-long outing to Yellowstone and Glacier national parks in July. Spees said that all members are invited to find a campground and organize a rally; however, the club also has a committee to help

ease the planning process.

“We started a new rally committee this year because it’s often difficult for some people to decide where they’d like to go and then plan it all themselves,” he explained. “So now, if you got an idea of where you want to go, you can bring it forward to the membership and we have this committee of five or six people that will work with you to plan it.”

That way, nobody has to take on all the logistics by themselves. “It really does work out well,” Spees said.

In addition to camping rallies, the Roadrunners RV Club also holds monthly meetings the third Tuesday of every month at the Tellico Village Yacht Club, along with a big Christmas party each December and an ice cream social in the summer.

Spees said that the club started a new initiative this year as well, called “Join a Roadrunner,” in which members are invited to join other members on their personal camping trips.

“This means that we don’t have to have a big rally planned to go somewhere with other members,” he said, noting that about 10 members joined him and his wife at Melton Hill Dam Campground in October. “We got together and we cooked out, had our bonfires and explored... It’s just a camaraderie, and doing all the things that campers are usually about.”

After all, for Spees, like most of the Roadrunners, this focus on community and meeting others with similar interests is precisely what the club is all about.

“Every campfire is an opportunity to meet new friends,” Spees said. “You never know who you’re going to meet.”



Although you do need to be a resident of Tellico Village and own an RV to join the Roadrunners, Spees emphasized that there are no other requirements.

“We don’t care whether your camper is 24-feet or 45-feet, come join us and hang out with us at the Yacht Club,” he said. “The people are just so friendly and outgoing, and it’s just a happy place to be... You know, I’m not really social myself but it’s like, once you get involved in this group, they just pull you out. It becomes a family.”

*For more information about the Tellico Roadrunners RV Club, visit [tellicoroadrunnersrvclub.org](http://tellicoroadrunnersrvclub.org).*

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# Music *returns to* Loudon

Loudon is preparing for a cultural resurgence as the Tate & Lyle Performing Arts Amphitheater at Loudon Municipal Park becomes the home of a new three year Levitt Foundation AMP Concert Series.



“This is a milestone that blends community pride, arts investment and the long awaited activation of one of the city’s most prominent public venues,” said Tammy Roberts, S3G Strategies Inc. founder and Loudon County Chamber of Commerce member.

The City of Loudon recently secured an \$84,000 Levitt AMP grant, “which it will match dollar for dollar, bringing more than \$160,000 in funding to support free outdoor concerts at the amphitheater through 2028,” Roberts said. “The award followed a statewide public vote in which Loudon finished first, reflecting a groundswell of local support.”

Roberts, a board member of Loudon ALIVE, the nonprofit partner behind the grant application, said the community’s response was “really inspiring,” noting the vote demonstrated how deeply residents value opportunities to gather and celebrate together.

#### **A venue with untapped potential**

The Tate & Lyle Performing Arts Amphitheater — a permanent outdoor stage with a 56-by-56 foot concrete performance area and capacity for more than 1,000 people — has long been one of the most visible features of Loudon Municipal Park, according to Roberts.

“Yet despite its size and promise, the venue has seen only intermittent use over the years,” she said.

“Built in the mid 2000s with support from Tate & Lyle, the amphitheater hosted a handful of concerts and community events but never developed a consistent programming schedule,” Roberts said. “Infrastructure challenges and limited resources slowed momentum.”

“The Levitt Foundation grant marks the most significant investment in the amphitheater’s programming since its construction,” she added.

#### **What the concert series means for Loudon**

“The Levitt model emphasizes free, family friendly, high quality live music designed to activate public spaces and strengthen community bonds,” Roberts said. “Loudon’s series will feature up to seven concerts per year, showcasing a mix of genres and artists.”

“City leaders expect the series to bring new energy to the park, attract visitors and support local businesses,” she said. The concerts are

See **MUSIC** on Page 18





# 2026 East Tennessee Polar Plunge

We plunged into the New Year in East Tennessee as 56 participants took part in the East TN Polar Plunge on New Year's Day at the Vonore Recreational Boat Ramp. Hosted in partnership by Visit Loudon County and Visit Monroe, the event combined community, fun, and a shared commitment to giving back.

Plungers of all ages took the plunge with this year's youngest participant being aged 6 and the oldest being 80 years old. The plungers were cheered on by dozens of spectators standing along the shoreline.

The Polar Plunge raised \$1,500, all of which will benefit the local non-profit organization Keep Monroe Beautiful. The organization is dedicated to improving the environmental health and appearance of Monroe County through litter prevention, cleanup initiatives, education, and beautification projects. Funds raised from the plunge will support these ongoing efforts, helping keep local waterways, parks, and public spaces clean and welcoming.

Organizers from Visit Loudon County and Visit Monroe are



appreciative of the strong turnout and community support. The event not only highlighted the natural beauty of the Tellico Lake area but also emphasized the positive impact of collaboration between neighboring counties and local organizations.

The East Tennessee Polar Plunge will take place in Loudon County in 2027 with event proceeds donated to a non-profit organization selected by Visit Loudon County.

## 9th Annual Taste of Loudon County & Business Expo Set for February 27

The Loudon County Chamber of Commerce invites the community to attend the 9th Annual Taste of Loudon County & Business Expo on Friday, February 27, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at The Venue, 7690 Creekwood Park Blvd.

This highly anticipated annual event brings together area restaurants, businesses, and community members for a day of networking, discovery, and delicious food. Attendees can sample a wide variety of offerings from local eateries, food suppliers, and caterers while also connecting with Chamber member businesses showcasing their products and services.

The event is proudly presented by Knoxville TVA Employees Credit Union, with JTEKT serving as the Food Court Sponsor and Visionary Sponsors: Express Blinds, Shutters, Drapes, and

Akhrass Dental Implant & Cosmetic Center and SERVPRO of Loudon County. Their support helps make this signature Chamber event possible.

Taste tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children, making it an affordable and family-friendly way to experience the best of Loudon County's business and culinary community.

Community members are encouraged to come out, enjoy great food, and support local Chamber members who play a vital role in

keeping Loudon County thriving.

*For more information, contact the Loudon County Chamber of Commerce at (865) 458-2067.*



**Fire Department**  
**From page 13**

ployed business owners and corporate executives. Many started with no experience and tackled the training necessary to be certified EMRs, EMTs, Advanced EMTs and firefighters. They attend classes and participate in training session at the station, honing their skills.”

Ballinger said the organization is “100 percent volunteer” and is a 501 (c)3, funded primarily by the generosity of the residents of Tellico Village. We also pursue grants from FEMA, the State of Tennessee and the county as well as local foundations.

TVVFD operates “much like a city department that has career firefighters and medical personnel,” Ballinger said. “In our case, we have an outside Board of Directors that oversees the department and a Chief that is elected by the membership and BOD to run the department.

“The day-to-day operations are handled by the Fire Chief and staff,” he continued. “The Loudon County 911 Center receives the calls for help and dispatches the department on calls, [then] two emergency medical response units are in service 24 hours a day, seven days a week located at the home of volunteers.

“If you call for emergency medical help, one of those medical bags is likely to be at your front door in three to five minutes.”

Last year, the organization responded to more than 1,700 calls. Behind the manpower is an array of exceptional medical equipment, a light-duty rescue truck, a ladder truck acquired in 2017, which, along two engine trucks all meet the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards and, most recently, a rescue boat, as Tellico Village is a lakefront community.

“The increase in emergencies on the lake, in marinas, and on docks throughout the Village created a need for new marine, fire, and rescue capabilities,” said Ballinger, who noted a county grant facilitated the purchase of the boat in 2023.

“The boat [which was christened ‘Lady Tellico’] was built for

the specialized operations of fire rescue on the lake and with waterfront homes/businesses,” he said. “Since placing it in service, it has responded to numerous calls in both Loudon and Monroe counties participating in firefighting, search, rescue and recovery efforts.”

TVVFD’s lake operation capabilities “were expanded in 2025 with the addition of an ‘Aqua Eye Pro’ with the ‘Command Hub,’” he noted. “This is a handheld underwater sonar unit that uses artificial technology to read the sonar array identifying a drowning victim speeding rescue and recovery operations.

“There are only two units in Eastern Tennessee at this time, with the second located with the Hopewell Fire Department, [which] protects the Kahite neighborhood of Tellico Village.

“Within weeks of receiving the units they were deployed to suspected drowning incidents and worked flawlessly.”

Additionally, “department members manage a program that checks around docks for in-water electric hazards if requested by the owner,” he said. “This was started in 2025 and continues.

And, “for the past couple of years, the department has worked with the TVPOA to perform safety and fire inspections on existing buildings as well as consulting on the design and reconstruction of the Tanasi Restaurant and Golf ProShop.”

Ballinger, who has been with TVVFD since 2000, has a long firefighting/EMT history, starting in 1977 when he began working for the fire service in Montgomery County Maryland, and continuing volunteering in various cities and states before moving to Tellico Village.

“Over the years it has been my way of supporting the communities where I have lived in a meaningful way,” he said “Along the way, I’ve meet incredible people and experienced things (good and bad) that most do not get the opportunity to experience.”

*To learn more about the Tellico Village Volunteer Fire Department or to volunteer or become a member, visit their website at [www.tellicofd.org](http://www.tellicofd.org).*

**Aguilar**  
**From page 12**

assured her, and Aguilar has been working as a health insurance agent for HealthMarkets Insurance Agency since November 2024.

She specializes “in Medicare, along with helping individuals, families, self-employed and small businesses find coverage that fits their needs perfectly.

“I have extensive training not only with health insurance and Medicare, but also with life insurance and supplemental plans that can help fill the gaps that [a given] plan may have.

“I do offer free quotes and consultations to help educate not only my clients but my community about their options,” she continued. “Whether you are under 65 or aging into Medicare, I would love to have a chat with you so that you know what options are available to you and you can make an informed choice on your health insurance and your needs.”

Just as she experienced herself, Aguilar has found that “there’s so many people out there [who] don’t understand how insurance works and just feel like they can’t afford it or qualify.

Additionally, “it has been such a blessing to have HealthMarkets behind me through all of this because they have offered continued support and education to better me and my knowledge,”

Aguilar noted. “I have a team behind me at all times that I can bounce things off of and they can bounce things off of me.

She said her new endeavor “has been an incredible journey. What I didn’t realize is that this opportunity was going to be so much more [than a job].

“I love working with my clients each and every day, helping them find a complete package that fits all of their needs for them and their family.”

*For more information, please contact Aguilar by phone at (865) 358-4993, email [saguilar@healthmarkets.com](mailto:saguilar@healthmarkets.com) or visit [HealthMarkets.com/saguilar](http://HealthMarkets.com/saguilar).*

**Music**  
**From page 16**

also expected to complement ongoing revitalization efforts downtown.

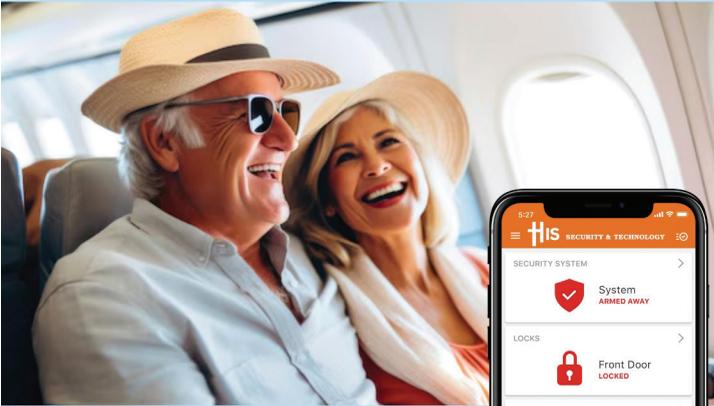
“This is exactly the kind of momentum we’ve been working toward,” Roberts said. “It brings people together, supports our local economy and helps make Loudon a better place to work, live and play.”

**A new chapter for a community landmark**

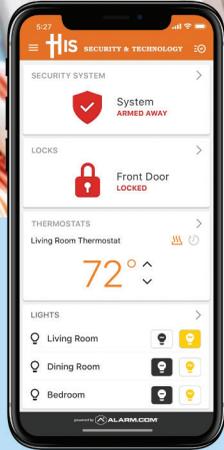
For many residents, the amphitheater has always symbolized potential ... a space waiting for its moment. “With the Levitt Foundation partnership now secured, that moment has arrived,” Roberts said. “The first season of concerts is expected to begin later this year, with a full lineup to be announced after organizers complete training and planning sessions provided as part of the grant.”

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