

# Why We Love Living in the East Tennessee Smokies!

I have lived in Sevier County since 1995, and you couldn't drag me out now. There are many reasons why my wife Whitney (a life-long resident of East Tennessee) love it here, but here are some of the primary ones:

**1.Beauty** – There's a reason why we have a National Park here, and why folks travel from hundreds of miles (and in some cases from thousands of miles) away to visit here. The beauty of our scenery is indeed superb, and our site highlights several [photographs](#) of some of our beautiful area.

**2.Safety** – We have an exceptionally low crime rate, actually one of the lowest in the entire United States. It's a little like living in the Mayberry made famous by the old Andy Griffith Show, but much prettier (see #1).

**3.Economic Opportunity** – As one of the fastest growing areas in Tennessee, Sevier County offers exceptional business and personal opportunities. No matter what type skill, profession, or business expertise you have, you can succeed here with a little effort and ingenuity!

**4.Four Distinct yet Mild Seasons** – Unlike many parts of the country, we just don't have to endure much harsh [weather](#). Generally, the hottest days in the summer are around 90 degrees, and a really cold winter night is anything under 20 degrees. In short, varied, but usually mild. Also, we've never had a tornado anywhere in Sevier County (thanks mostly to the mountains, I guess!).

**5.Affordability** – No, you can't buy land for \$1,000 an acre anymore, but compared to many parts of the country, our living costs are still very reasonable. With our low cost of living, Sevier County is a great place to live well in, for much less than many other resort type destinations.

**6.Very Low Taxes** – A friend of mine once said, "Jeff, just be glad that you don't get ALL of the government that you pay for!" While I have to agree, we just don't pay that much. Property taxes vary by city within the county, but you can expect to pay around \$500 annually in total property taxes per \$100,000 in property market value. We do not have ANY state or local income taxes, so we get off *very* lightly here. The county does have a sales tax of 7% which is combined with Sevier County's tax of 2.5% to total 9.50%. This tax is applied to almost any purchase (including food, clothing, medicine) other than large ticket items like automobiles, real estate, and farm equipment which are taxed at lower rates. Tennessee does have a real estate transfer tax, which amounts to \$0.37 per \$100 of the property's purchase price. Additionally, a mortgage tax is imposed at the time of purchase that's \$0.115 on each \$100 of the mortgage amount. The first \$2,000 is exempt from the mortgage tax. It is important to note that the transfer and mortgage taxes are one time charges that are imposed at the time of purchase only. Other fees include a charge of \$28 annually for a vehicle license tag, regardless of the value or type vehicle, and a fee of about \$50 per two years for a Tennessee driver's license. All in all, in my opinion, we are very lightly taxed, and it's a privilege to live in the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee! Don't take my word for it, check out this ranking of state tax burdens: <http://taxfoundation.org/sites/taxfoundation.org/files/docs/ff2013.pdf>.

**7.Good Schools** – Sevier County schools, and in particular the Gatlinburg area schools consistently score very well when compared to other public schools around the country.

**8. Family Values** – Don't want to sound like a politician, but we have many more churches in East Tennessee than we do bars, and we like it that way! If you want to get to know folks here, join a good church! If you like, we'd be very glad to have you visit [our church](#).