

Sugar Hollow Retreat
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(800) 957-1776

SUGAR HOLLOW PROVIDES CLOSE GETAWAY FOR BUSINESS GROUP

BUTLER, Tenn. – Chuck Bowling had heard good things about Sugar Hollow, but nothing prepared him for the setting.

“The physical beauty of the place is really amazing,” said Bowling, who visited the retreat in December 2007 for a team building exercise. “We felt like we were getting far away even though we weren’t that far.”

Bowling and his group of eight from Appalachian State University worked with Blue Ridge Learning Center to escape and work on the team’s communication skills. They stayed at the 10-bedroom Lodge. The full kitchen, game room, living room and dining room for 30 gave them plenty of space -- and they didn’t have to leave the Sugar Hollow campus to achieve their goals.

The group spent one night and two days there, hiking and working together to accomplish tasks. Using GPS units, the team also did some geocaching in the area, which is like treasure hunting.

Tucked in the mountains of the Cherokee National Forest, Sugar Hollow is midway between Boone and Elizabethton. For groups from Appalachian State, it’s the perfect distance.

To go anywhere off site from the workplace adds relaxation, Bowling said.

“I was really impressed,” he said. “It’s very well appointed. For a small group it’s a wonderful place to go. It’s very productive.”

Bowling’s group didn’t need to use the 1,200-square-foot conference center, but other business groups have found the extra space with full kitchen useful. Some youth groups have even stayed there, sleeping on the floor and making use of the three showers.

For smaller groups, Sugar Hollow offers four other cabins, each with three to five bedrooms and at least two bathrooms. If your team-building doesn’t include plans to cook in the cabins’ full-sized and fully stocked kitchens, you can have meals catered in.

Bowling has moved on from Appalachian State, but the memories have stayed with him.

“They were so accommodating,” he said. “I can’t believe how beautiful it is.”

