

views Friendly Village



Community Profile

Located in the heart of the Central Valley, in the city of “water, wealth, contentment, health” is a manufactured home community true to its name: Friendly Village. The 38-year-old, gated community has a reputation for being one of the best, if not *the* best communities in Modesto. The city’s mild year-round weather and well-manicured lawns earned it the nickname “Garden City” in the early 1900s. Today, the beautiful park-like setting called Friendly Village, with its tall trees and vast greenbelts blanketing the grounds, perfectly depicts a *garden city*.



Setting & Amenities

“Our location is great,” exclaims Dennis Dollar, manager. Friendly Village, which houses seniors age-55-and-older in nearly 300 homes, is nestled near area golf courses, ranches, and bike trails, along with 66 parks, the Stanislaus River for rafting, and various lakes for fishing, boating, and water sports. Access to the 99 Freeway conveniently lands residents at restaurants, theaters, and shopping venues. For those who do not drive, city bus stops are located just outside of each of the property’s gates. Another option is “Dial A Ride,” a specialized transportation service provided by the city of Modesto, which operates seven days a week every day of the year for persons with disabilities and seniors 65 and older. “We have a beautiful clubhouse with a kitchen, library and billiard room,” describes



Dennis. Residents have begun working out in the new exercise room with professional grade fitness equipment, and barbecuing at the recently installed gas barbecue center near the heated pool and spa. Neighbors also enjoy playing a game of golf on the putting green. “A bocce ball court is next on our list,” Dennis predicts.

The Dollars promote resident relations through their monthly newsletter, which provides upcoming event information and tips, and through occasional informational speakers, who discuss subjects such as local utility discount programs. “Annually, we host a St. Patrick’s Day Dinner, a Fourth of July BBQ, “Senior Prom,” a holiday party in December, and of course our yearly “SuperQue”” describes Janet Dollar. With between 175 and 200 attendees, the SuperQue is Friendly Village’s most popular event. The property’s professional management staff at Vedder Community Management (VCM), including Director of Operations, Bill Schweinfurth, cooks dinner for all the attendees, and delivers meals to the many more who are unable to attend. The event was named in its early years for the portable barbecue used to prepare the feast: an old propane tank sliced in half lengthwise provided enough room to grill about 75 steaks at a time! All 18 VCM communities host a popular SuperQue sometime in the spring or summer.

Other free programs and activities offered to the neighbors of Friendly Village include water aerobics in the summer, a low-impact Sit & Get Fit class, weekly donuts & coffee hour, Bingo, bowling leagues, golf outings, and quilting and scrapbooking classes. "What we are most proud of is a community-wide quilt project that resulted in a beautiful quilt we display in our clubhouse for patriotic holidays," describes Janet.

Management Team

Managers Janet and Dennis Dollar began working at Friendly Village 15 years ago, helping with maintenance and office duties. They quickly became assistant managers and have been managing the community solely for the last seven years. Formerly a construction worker, Dennis has also been working for VCM for four years as a field representative overseeing three Northern Califor-

nia communities. The Dollars onsite staff "are all residents, so they really take pride in our community and the work they do," explains Janet. Lisa Albracht assists in the office, Larry Bolles provides office and on-call relief, Dan Willingham and Chuck Faultner maintain the grounds, and Ruth Penn keeps the clubhouse in order. "We couldn't have better people helping us!"

Vedder Community Management, a member of WMA for 25 years, is very involved with Friendly Village. VCM highly values having the best-trained managers in the industry. Toward that goal, all managers are MCM-certified, or in the process of becoming certified. They regularly attend WMA seminars, along with other industry-specific classes for training. "These events help us stay on top of this fast changing industry!" says Janet. Further, VCM hosts an annual two-day managers conference, during which the Dollars have

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consistently been recognized for their outstanding resident programs and safety. "It is very rewarding to be acknowledged for the dedication we have to our community and residents," reacts Janet.

Janet and Dennis describe their relationship with VCM as "excellent." "We couldn't work for a better company that truly cares not only about the residents but also their employees." They provide the best tools and technology with which to work and provide the Dollars a huge amount of support. They also give back to the community through special programs like their Thanksgiving care baskets for less fortunate neighbors, or the rent assistance program for long time residents for whom a rent increase may cause an undue hardship. "VCM is the best in the business," asserts Janet. "We just can't see working for anyone else!"

Philosophy & Approach

"Four major initiatives define our philosophy," explains Dennis. "First, we want to operate a safe community for our residents and employees. Second, we want to have great relations with our residents. Third, we want to keep the community very well maintained. And, finally, we want to develop and use the best administrative/technological practices in the business. Our ultimate goal: A safe, well maintained community with happy, satisfied residents, all managed in the best and most efficient way possible."

When it comes to maintaining positive community relations, the Dollars try to strike a balance between being professional and being involved on a more personal level. "You can't live and work in this type

of atmosphere without becoming attached to the residents you see almost every day," Dennis explains. However, Janet and Dennis attempt to treat everyone fairly and uniformly, whether they interact with homeowners on a daily basis or just once a month. Their experience has been that if you give

back to the community and the residents see you are working hard and trying to make their lives better every day, then the general atmosphere will be positive. Overall, the Dollar's approach is to never assume anything, always be a good listener, and to live by the Golden Rule. "The residents of Friendly Village are the best," gushes Janet. "It's a caring, tight knit 'family,' where everyone watches out for each other." The community is truly a friendly village. [m](#)

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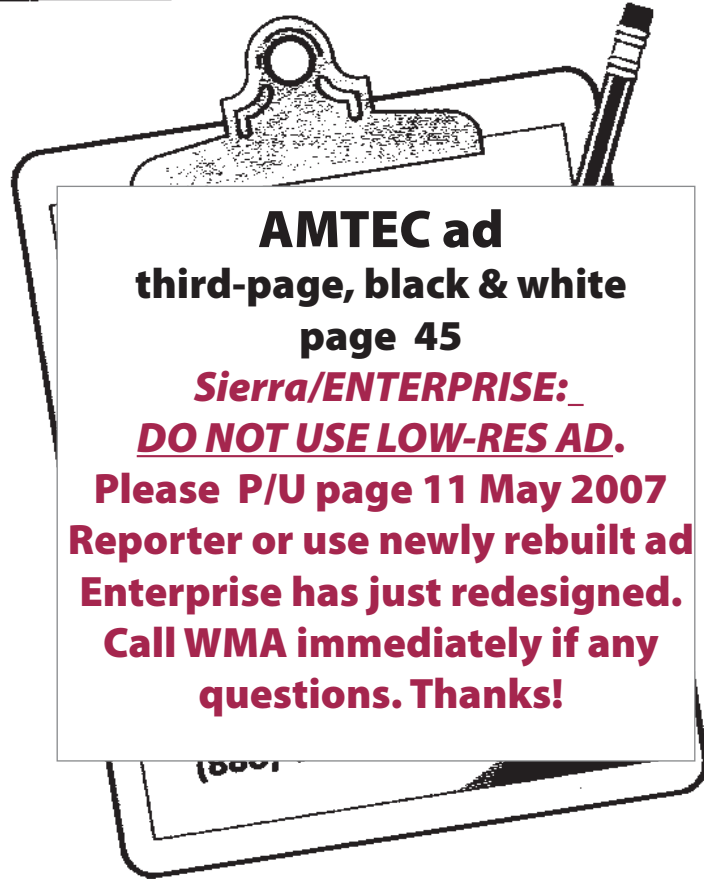
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