

Commission on Aging

607 N. Sales St., Merrill, WI 54452
Phone (715) 536-0311

**TO: THE HONORABLE LINCOLN COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

2007 ANNUAL REPORT

The goal of the Commission on Aging is to help the older residents of Lincoln County be as healthy and happy as possible. We accomplish this through various health promotion and disease prevention programs and by assisting people to retain their independence as long as possible. Our programs and services include:

- ✦ Nutrition Program – Good nutrition is the single most important factor in helping people stay healthy and independent. We offer noon meals at three locations and deliver to the homebound throughout the county.
- ✦ Transportation – We take people to medical appointments, some as far as Milwaukee and Iron Mountain, and some three days a week for dialysis. People are transported via bus/van to and from the noon meal locations.
- ✦ Benefit Specialist – Our Benefit Specialist provides assistance to people who have questions and problems involving benefit and consumer issues. In 2007, she made a positive monetary impact of nearly \$500,000 for county residents.
- ✦ Caregiver Support Program – We assist families and caregivers caring for people with dementia and chronic disease to help them cope.
- ✦ Adults-at-risk (age 18 to 59) and Elder Abuse – We provide education to protect people from abuse, conduct investigations when an abuse report is received, and establish services as needed. Abuse can include: emotional, physical, financial, neglect and self-neglect.
- ✦ Health Promotion and Disease Prevention – We sponsor, along with the Health Dept., foot care clinics. We provide educational workshops and programming all year aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles, such as Steps to Healthy Aging, Suicide Prevention, Fall Prevention, Powerful Tools for Caregiving and Living Well with Chronic Conditions.
- ✦ Mental Health – We provide in-home counseling, case management, and support groups for people with a wide variety of concerns.
- ✦ Information and Assistance – We answer a wide variety of questions, provide information, make referrals to other agencies, establish services, publish a monthly newsletter, offer a speakers service, publish an Older Adult Services Directory, and have a loan closet with adaptive equipment.
- ✦ Senior Statesman – We provide a scholarship annually to someone 55 or older for attendance at the Senior Statesman program, to learn about how state and local government works and how to be an effective advocate.
- ✦ Volunteer Opportunities – The Commission could not do all that we do, could not provide all the services and programs, without our strong corps of 175+ volunteers.

From total revenues of nearly \$753,000, funding for our programs is comprised of 59% from various federal, state and local grants, 27% from participant donations, and 14% from the county tax levy. We are unique in that, in addition to our participant donations, our corps of volunteers contributed the equivalent of more than five full-time employees.

NEW IN 2007 –

- ◆ Continued to hold educational presentations and workshops and counseling to individuals about Medicare Part D.
- ◆ The Director of the Commission on Aging assumed supervision of the Long Term Support Unit in the Department of Social Services, with both units creating an Adult Services Center, assisting elders as well as physically disabled adults. This is another step toward an Aging and Disability Resource Center, and provides comprehensive and cost-effective service to clients.
- ◆ Barb Hartwig became certified as an Information and Assistance Specialist by the national Alliance of Information and Referral Systems, a requirement of an Aging and Disability Resource Center.
- ◆ The Aging Population Coalition, comprised of agencies, organizations and businesses to help manage the influx of aging Baby Boomers into retirement, sponsored Business Forums in Merrill and Tomahawk, to assist businesses in preparing for a changing work force.
- ◆ Continued working with the Human Services Group to prepare for the creation of an Aging and Disability Resource Center.
- ◆ Along with the Solid Waste Department, the Health Department, law enforcement and pharmacies, we held a Medication Collection, to properly dispose of unused or out-of-date medications.

2007 COMMISSION ON AGING MEMBERS –

Ronald Krueger - Chair, County Board member

Robert Hirschall – Vice-Chair

Ruben Radtke – second Vice-Chair

Donna Simek - Secretary

Marcella Diedrick– Northern Area Agency on Aging Board member

Arlene Meyer – County Board member, Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups representative

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I am privileged to serve the older residents of Lincoln County and honored to work with our dedicated volunteers. The Commission on Aging, along with the Lincoln County Board of Supervisors and other county agencies and organizations, work cooperatively together to assure a high quality of service to the older residents of Lincoln County. I thank all of you for your continued support, enabling us to continue to effectively provide services assisting the older residents of Lincoln County in remaining as healthy and happy as possible.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Winker, Director