



Report to the Commissioners
Area IX Agency on Aging, Flathead County
April 15, 2013
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Story: Partnering to keep seniors warm in the winter and cool in the summer

Local HVAC company, AirWorks, is a life saver when it comes to helping low income seniors. Older seniors often experience adverse health consequences from temperatures that are too cold or too hot. To ensure seniors stay warm in the winter, we refer seniors to AirWorks Safe Heat for Seniors Program in which they perform free furnace inspections for seniors during the slower summer months to make sure they are in good working order. To keep them cool in the summer, AirWorks has 10 portable air conditioner units, some of which were purchased by AOA and some by AirWorks, that they will install for free for seniors who cannot otherwise afford them. When summer is over, they remove the A/Cs, service them and store them until the next year. We've begun to get calls for this service as the temperatures warm up and have already referred five seniors so far.

AirWorks owners Bill and Diane Yarus are long-time supporters of the seniors in the Flathead Valley and Diane serves on the AOA Senior Mobile Home Repair Board. **Thanks Bill and Diane for helping to keep the senior community healthy!**

AOA Administration

Budget

- Staff has been working closely with Finance to develop the proposed FY 2014 budget and CIP and revise proposed amendments to the FY 2013 budget based on a cross-walk with the DPHHS contract and an analysis of receipts and expenditures to date.
 - Further revisions to the FY 2013 budget may be necessary to address an anticipated 4.79% cut in federal FY 2013 funds. AOA's current state contract includes both federal FY 2012 funds (which will not be cut) and FY 2013 funds.
 - The proposed FY 2014 budget includes a potential 8.2% cut in federal FY 2014 funding as a result of the sequester. DPHHS has advised that state funding levels will remain the same or possibly increase.
 - It appears that AOA has sufficient funds to absorb the potential cuts in both FY 2013 and FY 2014 without reducing services at this time. The negative impact will be further mitigated if state funding is increased.

Legislative Issues

- The Montana state legislature appears to be moving forward in its consideration of adding aging services to the base budget (as opposed to the One-Time-Only status it has had for many years), providing additional funding of \$500,000 per year over the biennium and allowing for a provider rate increase.
- Lisa will attend the quarterly M4A meeting in Helena next week (4/24-25), which will include a session with Richard Opper the new DPHHS Director.

Building

- CDBG
 - The Kalispell City Council public hearing was postponed from 4/1/13 to 5/6/13 to allow additional time for the completion of the Preliminary Architectural Report (PAR) and other grant requirements.
 - The County Commissioners will discuss the PAR on 4/18/2013.
- Public Input
 - Focus Groups
 - As part of the overall AOA strategic planning process and gaining public input for the CDBG application, focus groups have been held with various stakeholders, including Senior Center Boards and general membership, AOA Advisory Boards, other service professionals, volunteers, those who receive AOA services and interested members of the community-at-large. The proposed building is one of the topics covered. All sessions were recorded for transcription. An RSVP volunteer will transcribe the sessions beginning this week.
 - Twelve focus groups have been held to date. No additional groups are scheduled at this time.
 - Open Forum – A “town hall” forum was held at AOA on 3/21/13.
 - Support Letters – We are in the process of gathering support letters to submit with the CDBG grant application (flier attached)
- Kelly Road
 - **Thank you to the Commissioners** for approving the following modification, which have been completed or are in process of being completed to address safety concerns:
 - Additional office space in the front of the building to eliminate the use of the offices in the food storage area for serving individuals seeking I&R assistance; the offices that will no longer be in use for staff will serve as storage for commodities as they have portable air-conditioners that will prevent potential damage and spoilage from excessive heat.
 - Sealing the area that causes frequent flooding in the food storage area
 - Re-sealing the concrete floors in the kitchen and dining areas
 - Rewiring to eliminate the use of electrical cords across the floors to power the serving line.

Advisory Council

- The next AOA Advisory Council and Finance Committee meetings will be held on 4/18/2013.
- The By-law Review Committee met on 3/18/13 to discuss possible revisions to increase clarity, eliminate contradictory language, ensure the inclusion of Older Americans Act requirements and consider options for streamlining and enhancing Council and Committee functions. The Committee agreed that suggested changes will be submitted to the County Attorney’s office for review to make sure they are allowable prior to review and discussion by the full Council.

Strategic Planning

- The strategic planning process, which will provide the foundation for and complement the development of future programming as well as the building proposal, continues with various stakeholders throughout the County.

Outreach/Education/Media - Increased outreach is a goal in our Area Plan on Aging (Oct. 2011- Sept. 2015)

- The Daily Interlake advertised the Open Forum on 3/19/13 and published an article on the Forum on 3/22/13.
- Dave Polansky, Eagle Transit Manager, presented at the Kalispell Senior Center general meeting on 3/28/13.
- Peggy Colby, I&R staff, participated on a panel at the Veterans Service Providers event on 3/29/13.
- Lisa Sheppard gives weekly brief presentations about AOA events and services every Wednesday morning at BNI.
- Lisa presented to the Kalispell Kiwanis on 4/4/13.

- Upcoming:
 - On 4/20/13 RSVP staff will participate in the annual United Way Share Fair at Center Mall.
 - Lisa is scheduled to speak to the Noon Rotary on 5/2/13.

Eagle Transit

- March 2013 ridership was 8,240 compared with 8,143 in March 2012. FY13 ridership to date is 70,959 up 2.1% from last year's total of 69,466. Annual target is 78,750 or approximately 6,562 rides per month. The average for this fiscal year through February 2013 is 7,884 rides per month. We are on track to total more than 90,000 rides this fiscal year.
- AOA/Eagle Transit staff and several members of the Eagle Transit Advisory Board met with LSC Transportation Consultants to discuss steps in developing the new Five Year Transit Development Plan and to provide data and background material.
- The Eagle Transit Advisory Board met on 4/11/13. Chandler Communications presented a proposal for public service announcements on the inside of the buses. LSC Transportation Consultants presented the components of and timeline for completing the five year plan.

Nutrition

- Total meals served in March were 6,666. Congregate meals totaled 3,304 and home delivered meals totaled 3,362. There were 17 new home-delivered customers for a yearly total of 292 and 43 new congregate customers for a yearly total of 906. Total meals served this fiscal year as of 3/31/13 were 56,657. Average meals served per month to date is 6,295, which is slightly under the FY 2012 average of 6,370 meals per month. Our target for FY 2013 is 77,250 (monthly average 6,437).
- A new "Bring a Friend" initiative is underway in partnership with Senior Centers to support efforts to increase the number of congregate customers.
- The annual Older Americans Day Picnic, celebrating the importance and value of Flathead seniors, is scheduled for Friday June 21, 2013 at the Fairgrounds. Thank you to Fairgrounds Director Mark Campbell for his continued support of this effort. **We'd love to have Commissioners join us in serving seniors that day.**

I & R

- March 2013 Independent Living statistics include:
 - 247 hours of homemaker services (2,580 through 3/31/13, an average of 286 per month); our annual target is 3,675 or an average of 306 hours per month
 - Total number of homemaker clients through 3/31/13: 145
 - 158 hours of escort/errand services (1,400 through 3/31/13, an average of 155 per month); there is no workload indicator for this service in the FY 2013 budget
 - Total number of escort/errand clients through 3/31/13: 56
 - 241 hours of respite (2131 through 3/31/13, an average of 236 per month); our annual target is 3,500, which averages 292 hours per month.
 - Total number of respite clients through 3/31/13: 65
- From February:
 - 13 new legal clients
 - 1,598 calls/walk-in assistance; our annual target is 11,220 units of service, an average of 935 per month
 - 36 telephone reassurance calls
 - 19 Ombudsman visits
 - 16 SHIP contacts
 - 134 home visits to at risk clients
- We are experiencing an increased demand for escort/errand services and are placing people from the waiting list onto services. Priority is given to those on dialysis or chemotherapy.

- Staff has developed a new risk assessment protocol to better identify, serve and track clients at risk for institutionalization.
 - A preliminary sample of clients using the new system showed 70% of those receiving AOA IL services are at a high risk of institutionalization, 48% experience the highest degree of risk in at least one category and 27% show the highest degree of risk in multiple categories.
 - Nursing facility care (the majority of which is tax-payer funded) costs \$70,000 per year compared to an average cost of less than \$1000 per year per person for AOA services.
- IT continues to work with AOA to retire the outdated data collection system and ancient server, and is in the process of helping us get set up to post program information and statistics on the Web site. **Thanks IT!**

RSVP

- In 2012, fourteen volunteers served 870 hours valued at \$13,293 at the following County Departments: Health, Animal Shelter, Finance, HR and the Justice Court.
- The All Schools Cribbage Tournament on 3/27/13 was a great success! Thank you to all of the students, parents, RSVP coaches and other volunteers, as well as the businesses who donated all of the food, for making it such a great experience for everyone involved.
- The RSVP Advisory Board met on 3/28/13 and participated in a focus group.
- The annual Volunteer Recognition banquet will be held at the end of May at Northridge Lutheran Church. The theme is “40 Years of Making a Difference” in honor of RSVP’s 40th anniversary in the Flathead. **We’d love to have Commissioners attend and speak at the opening.**

Senior Mobile Home Repair

- The Advisory meeting was held 4/9/13.
- Five projects have been completed; five are in progress (including two previously completed projects that needed additional work).
- New donations were received totaling \$100.
- Grant awards/requests:
 - Awarded a \$5000 grant from the Washington Foundation
 - Soroptimist Award through the Kalispell Foundation for \$500
 - Request for \$2000 from BNSF, should learn if awarded shortly.

Senior Centers - A primary AOA focus is outreach to area Senior Centers to build relationships, extend support, and explore new opportunities for partnership.

- Focus groups have been held with all Center Boards and general membership at each Center.
- On 4/5/13, we facilitated a meeting for representatives from all Centers and David Mirisch, fundraising consultant from Missoula, to discuss joint fundraising options.
- Center Board presidents will have their quarterly meeting on 5/6/13 in Columbia Falls to share ideas and discuss items of mutual interest.
- The Whitefish Community Center newsletter now includes information on AOA services and how to access them.
- Kalispell Senior Center has evicted their renter for non-payment of rent and is in the process of determining the feasibility of repairing and re-renting the unit.
- **Thanks to Jed Fischer** for arranging to rid the Bigfork Senior Center of spotted knapweed!