



Report to the Commissioners
Area IX Agency on Aging, Flathead County
July 15, 2013
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Story: Each Day A Gift

After a certain age, life is statistically measured not in decades but in years, months, weeks and sometimes days. We don't have the luxury of assuming that we have time – time to achieve, time to play, time to give, time to love. Intellectually we know this, but we still get caught up in the day-to-day rush of our lives until loss stills the moment and it becomes achingly clear how important it is to appreciate and enjoy the people in our lives each day. At AOA, this is a bittersweet lesson that visits us all too often. Each morning, Sally reads the obituaries and lets us know who in our vast circle of clients, their families, volunteers and friends has passed. Invariably the initial sadness quickly gives way to stories, many of them funny, some tragic, but all a reminder of the person's unique place in our collective lives. This past month, we were reminded on several occasions of the privilege we have to know, serve and work alongside some amazing people and how precious every day we have with them is.

The Older American's Picnic

The picnic was a huge success – approximately 425 seniors plus numerous volunteers came together on June 21st to eat some great food and enjoy even better company. The picnic is a time for people to gather and catch up with those they may not have seen since last year. Amid the hugs and “how've you beens” were the conspicuously “empty chairs,” those who had passed or were no longer able to join us because of poor health. Their absence was noted with regret and concern, and yes, with stories.

Wayne Laisy: January 8, 1916-July 2, 2013

You've heard me talk before about Wayne, our oldest and unfailingly reliable Meals on Wheels driver, serving his friends and neighbors in Bigfork for many years. Wayne died earlier this month after a relatively short hospitalization. He was 97, full of life and still delivering meals as of May. He loved to tell stories (especially about his discovery that his tea-totaling family was closely related to the founders of Anheuser-Busch of Budweiser fame), eat cherry pie at Sykes with his lady friend Willy, play the piano and beat his friends at cards. He also had a long history of playing practical jokes. Wayne studied civil engineering as a young man, which led to a lifelong love of designing, restoring and building – cars, farm equipment, houses, you name it. Across the years he made his living managing his family's farm, owning a truck stop and repair service, and eventually retiring as a mechanic with the Montana DOT. Wayne was part of our AOA family and he will be sorely missed.

For me personally, the moment stilled when I got a call that one of our Advisory Board members was in the hospital, quite possibly with a heart attack. Worried and anxious I began calling his family to try to find out more information and see what we could do to help. As it turns out, his condition was serious but not life-threatening as originally thought, and I was able to breathe again. The thought that we could have lost this person who is so committed to the work we do and to whom I have grown quite attached hit me like a ton of bricks. Intellectually I know, but my heart wasn't prepared. Someday, sooner rather than later as statistics go, his time will come as it will for many of the people I have come to know and love.

This is the work we do at AOA, and we are grateful for every day we get to do it.

AOA Administration

Budget

- FY 2014:
 - We anticipate requesting revisions to the FY 2014 budget as we move forward into the fiscal year to address the following:
 - additional federal funding cuts due to the sequester (see below for details),
 - replacing existing computers per IT instructions and including transfers to CERF for future purchases
 - adjusting both revenues and expenses at Eagle Transit to reflect revised estimates
 - the possible addition of FTEs in the Information/Referral/Assistance program to meet the need for an additional ombudsman and increased outreach efforts
 - **DPHHS contract:** Admin staff completed the FY 2014 DPHHS contract budget and submitted it to the state for review and approval. We are anticipating an additional 2% cut of the federal fiscal year 2013 funds (which are part of the state's FY 2014 budget). The contract budget will be revised if those cuts materialize. As noted last month, these cuts will in large part be offset by new state funding that includes additional money for aging services. Because the allocations are based on population increases recorded in the 2010 census, Flathead County will receive a net increase. The increase was initially estimated at \$27,725, but we expect this will be reduced.

State/Legislative Issues

- **Community First Choice Committee:** Lisa participated in the second Committee meeting on 6/25/13 in Helena. Discussion focused on best practices related to person-centered planning and coordination of efforts between Medicaid Waiver and CFC providers.
- **Charlie Rehbein, DPHHS Aging Services Bureau Chief,** presented to the Commissioners and the AOA Advisory Council on 7/11/13, providing an overview of Older Americans Act services and implementation model as well as the federal/state/local structure for implementation. Charlie also visited the Red Lion hotel and confirmed it as the venue for the FY 2014 Governor's Conference on Aging to be held on May 6-7, 2014.
- **M4A:** Lisa participated in the M4A conference call on 6/20/13. The next quarterly meeting will be held in Billings (changed from Havre) the last week of August.

Building

- **New building:** Nothing to report.
- **Kelly Road:** Several offices and the dining room were in need of window air conditioning units to ensure that temperatures do not get too hot for clients. Maintenance was able to provide and install two units that were not being used by other County offices and we have purchased two additional units that Maintenance will install next week. **Thanks to Maintenance once again for all their help!**

Advisory Council

- Members assisted with the Older Americans Picnic on 6/21/13 in lieu of the official June meeting. **Their efforts were greatly appreciated!**
 - Members of the **Wellness Workgroup developed and conducted a survey** on wellness related topics/needs at the picnic via interviews. 140 plus responses were gathered. We are in the process of analyzing the results to inform enhancements to existing programs and/or new initiatives.
- The full Council and Finance Committee met at the regularly scheduled date/time on 7/11/13. The agenda included discussion with Charlie Rehbein, possible changes to next year's picnic, and creation of an ad hoc workgroup to help put together the Governor's Conference.

Strategic Planning

- The AOA Council member who is working on the transcripts anticipates they will be completed and ready for review by 7/29/13. Once the transcriptions are analyzed they will inform the strategic plan and the next Area Plan.

Research and Program Evaluation

- We continued to screen clients for eligibility and interest in participating in a study by the U.S. Administration on Community Living on the effectiveness of different approaches to service provision to inform better delivery of long-term services and supports (LTSS).
- We completed client updates for those randomly selected to participate in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Eighth National Survey of Older Americans Act Participants in coordination with the Montana DPHHS.
- I&R and Nutrition staff assisted interested individuals to complete the Community First Choice Consumer Survey. Staff completed the Community First Choice Provider Survey. The surveys are intended to inform the State's CFC plan to be submitted to CFC for approval later this year.

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

- Ryan Murray, the new Senior Reporter at the Daily Interlake, interviewed staff about AOA's support of seniors to participate in the Care Farm project in partnership with APlus Healthcare. The article was published on 6/25/13.
 - As part of our new Outreach efforts, staff have also shared story ideas with Ryan, including submissions for the "Active Senior" column, Medicare counseling, the Older American's Picnic, etc.
- The Daily Interlake advertised the Older Americans Picnic on numerous days prior to the event.
- The Daily Interlake editorial board supported the AOA project as a high priority for the County's CIP in its column on 6/15/13, and the Interlake reported on the inclusion of the project in the approved CIP on 7/1/13.
- On 7/2/13 Lisa was interviewed by Fox News about the inclusion of the new building in the CIP.
- Free shuttle service at Glacier National Park provided through a contract with Eagle Transit was mentioned in article about the Park's opening for the season on 6/20/13.
- Lisa Sheppard gives weekly brief presentations about AOA events and services every Wednesday morning at BNI.
- Software for AOA that will allow us to post statistics, reports, menus, I&R info, newsletters and other items on the AOA page on the county website has arrived. IT began training staff in its use on 7/12/13.

Eagle Transit

- June 2013 ridership was 6,539 compared with 6,603 in June 2012. FY13 total ridership is 93,469 up 1.9% from last year's total of 91,770. Annual target is 78,750 or approximately 6,562 rides per month. The average for this fiscal year is 7,789 rides per month.
 - In addition to regular routes, Eagle Transit provided special bus service to the Older American's Picnic from Whitefish and Columbia Falls for 80 riders.
- The Eagle Transit Advisory Board met on 7/11/13. **LSC Transportation Consultants presented a draft of the Five Year Transit Development Plan for discussion.**
- Transportation Manager Dave Polansky is working on a DOT grant to obtain security cameras for all of the buses.
- Staff prepared for and participated in a successful "penny audit" from DOT.
- The Glacier Park shuttle is up and running for the season. The Park has authorized an increase in our budget to purchase a new server for park operations.
- We are in the process of hiring two new drivers. One part-time driver position has been eliminated in the FY 2014 budget pending a review of increased operating expenses.

Nutrition

- Total regular meals served in June were 6,555, which includes 450 congregate meals at the Older American's Picnic. Congregate meals totaled 3,482 and home delivered meals totaled 3,073. There were 18 new home-delivered customers for a yearly total of 349 and 23 new congregate customers for a yearly total of 1014. Total meals served this fiscal year were 75,543. Average meals served per month 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).
- The "Bring a Friend" initiative continues in partnership with Senior Centers to encourage congregate dining.
- The Older Americans Picnic was held Friday June 21, 2013 at the Expo Building at the Fairgrounds. RSVP members, 4H participants, AOA Council members and others volunteered for a variety of tasks, including set up, dessert preparation, decorating, sign-in tables, serving and clean up. **Thanks to all our volunteers and to Commissioners Krueger and Scott for joining us! And Happy Anniversary to Commissioner Holmquist!**

I & R/Assistance

- June 2013 Independent Living statistics include:
 - 244 hours of homemaker services (3,318 through 6/30/13, an average of 277 per month); our annual target is 3,675 or an average of 306 hours per month
 - 10 new clients; total number through 6/30/13: 172
 - 1434hours of escort/errand services (1,845 through 6/30/13, an average of 154 per month); there is no workload indicator for this service in the FY 2013 budget
 - 1 new client; total number of escort/errand clients through 6/30/13: 68
 - 181 hours of traditional respite (2,742 through 6/30/13, an average of 229 per month); our annual target is 3,500, which averages 292 hours per month.
 - 9 new clients; total number of respite clients through 6/30/13: 77
 - Note: Hours for Care Farm Respite not yet available
 - No one on waiting lists.
- June I&R statistics not yet available
- We will shortly post a half-time Ombudsman position.
- We have completed the final revision of the vulnerability matrix and are using it as part of client risk assessments starting July 1 and will begin reporting results next month.
- Lisa and Maarten Fischer of APlus Healthcare met with staff of the Rural Institute at the University of Montana to explore opportunities for collaboration regarding the Care Farm Project, hosting the Institute to providing training in Flathead County on low-tech/low cost assistive devices and home mods, and inviting their participation in the Governor's Conference on a panel re. aging in place and universal design.

RSVP

- The RSVP Advisory Board met on 6/27/13.
- Grant update: Staff are preparing for the compliance monitoring visit which will occur on 7/25-26/13.
- Fiscal Year Statistics:
 - 493 current active volunteers; 364 volunteers served this year, 75 of whom were new this year
 - **The majority of those who volunteered are over 74 years old! (52%)**
 - 15% are 85+
 - **Volunteers served 38,404 hours valued at \$604,095** (at the MT rate of \$15.73 per hour)
 - Preliminary numbers show 19 volunteers served 906 hours at County offices other than AOA for a total value of \$14,251 (does not include all June numbers)
 - Flathead County Detention Center is a new Workstation
 - 59 workstations with 126 different volunteer job types

- Plans underway:
 - Expanding the AOA Telephone Reassurance Program
 - Partnering with Friends of Flathead County Animal Shelter
 - Partnering with KRMC's new Emergency Room Transition Program
 - Joint fundraising with Kalispell Senior Center
 - The NWMT Fair in August
 - The annual Volunteer Recognition banquet in September.

Senior Mobile Home Repair

- The Advisory meeting was held 7/9/13.
- Thirteen projects are in progress.
- Funding:
 - \$500 received from Kalispell Soroptimists
 - \$5000 received from the Washington Foundation
 - \$2000 pledged from Plum Creek
 - Still awaiting word on \$3,500 from BNSF
- Discussed possibility of doing vulnerability matrix/risk assessment on SMHR clients to add to overall AOA data.

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

- Additional IIB funds were distributed to Senior Centers per the revised FY 2013 DPHHS budget. AOA admin staff will meet with Senior Center representatives to review the FY 2014 budget related to payments to Centers.
- Kalispell:
 - On 6/17/13, representatives from the Kalispell Senior Center Association presented a letter regarding their struggles to provide viable programming in and maintain the county-owned building in which they are housed. The Center's struggles were documented in a Daily Interlake article on 6/29/13.
 - On 7/2/13 the Daily Interlake featured a story about the Center's very successful and popular exercise program and the recent collaboration with Professional Therapy Associates.
 - Jim Pearson's term as Board President has expired but he will continue to be involved.
 - Lisa is scheduled to speak at the General Meeting on 7/25/13.