



Flathead County Agency on Aging Commissioner's Update – December 20, 2012

AOA Administration

- Beginning in late January, we will embark on a strategic planning process to guide our short and long-term activities. We will include as many stakeholders as possible including AOA staff, the AOA advisory boards for each program, Senior Centers, volunteers, individuals receiving services, and interested community members.
- We are in the preliminary stages of working with a consultant to plan a fundraiser in late spring.
- The AOA Advisory Board meeting was held on 12/13.
 - Staff presented the budget report which included an operating statement, explanation of variances and a balance sheet for each fund along with a description of major funding sources and instructions on how to read the reports generated through CSA.
 - The Board discussed transportation, nutrition, and the wellness initiative.
 - Commissioner Lauman reported on state legislative issues that will impact AOA funding and other services for seniors and the Board acted on his recommendation to create a Legislative Committee to educate state leadership about seniors' needs and what it will take to meet them in the coming years as the population increases.
 - The major issues at the state level are moving One-Time-Only Funding to the base budget, increasing general revenue by \$3 million over the biennium and restoring the Older Montanans Trust Fund.
 - Federal issues center around avoiding sequestration which would mean automatic cuts to AOA programs, resulting in approximately \$38,000 in reduced federal revenue to Flathead County this fiscal year.
 - The Board received an update on the AOA building proposal and ongoing efforts to express support as well as safety issues at the current building.
 - The Board accepted the Director's invitation to participate in a strategic planning exercise in February to inform the agency's direction and enhance the role of the Board in actively promoting AOA initiatives.
 - There are two vacancies on the Board. At least two applications have been submitted, including one from retiring Commissioner Dale Lauman, the news of which was greeted with much enthusiasm by the Board. Applications are due on December 21, 2012.
 - Two guests attended the meeting: Commissioner-elect Gary Krueger and a potential Board applicant.
- On 12/13/12, AOA Director Lisa Sheppard submitted a memo to County Administrator Mike Pence detailing safety concerns related to the AOA building on Kelly Road. Mike presented the memo to the Risk Management Team. The Risk Management Team toured the building on 12/14/2012 to review the issues firsthand.
- On 12/18/12 Lisa and other AOA stakeholders presented the need for a new building at the joint city/county Community Needs Assessment meeting with an emphasis on options that would

allow for greater community collaboration and partnership and opportunities for intergenerational programs.

Eagle Transit

- We received word that funding from our primary DOT grant will increase in the coming fiscal year.
- November ridership = 8,314 compared with 7,790 in 2011. FY13 ridership to date is 38,307 up 1.8% from 2011's total of 37,633. Annual target is 78,750 or approximately 6,562 rides per month. The average through November is 7,527 rides per month. We are on track to total more than 90,000 rides this fiscal year.
- Eagle Transit provided transportation to Christmas dinner at Our House: 119 people took the city bus and another 79 used the Dial-a Ride service for a total of 198 riders.
- Eagle Transit Advisory Board met on 12/6/12. The van pool subcommittee reported on plans to contact King County transportation officials to learn about their operation and how they manage associated risks.
- Buses will not run on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Nutrition

- In the 11/21/12 issue on "Giving Back" the Flathead Beacon featured Meals on Wheels cook John Taft. He has been an employee at AOA since 1978 and has prepared more than 2 million meals. He is the secret behind the wildly popular liver and onions, and he is sincerely dedicated to the seniors he serves. His own words from the article say it best, "Cooking has always been a joy because I know a lot of people rely on these meals." We are very proud of John's accomplishments and profoundly grateful that he continues to be part of our team.
- Total meals served in November were 6,229. Congregate total of 3,158 and home delivered were 3,071. 15 new home delivered customers and 98 new congregate customers.
- The Christmas meal will be served on 12/21/12 and all from the community are invited to join us. Seniors have the option of donating to support meal service. The cost to non-seniors is \$4.25. We anticipate preparing 500 meals.
- A study just released by Brown University shows that the more states spend on home-delivered meals through AOA programs the fewer residents they have in nursing homes.

I & R

- October statistics include 323 hours of homemaker services (up from 282 in September), 189 hours of escort/errand services (up from 147), 233 hours of respite (up from 224), 8 new legal clients, 1495 calls/walk-in assistance (up from 1031), 70 telephone reassurance calls (up from 64), 19 Ombudsman visits, and 284 SHIP contacts (up from 113 due in large part to Medicare open enrollment). Additionally, staff completed 36 home visits to at risk clients.
- The increased demand for services is exceeding our projected revenue. In January we are starting a waiting list for homemaker and escort/errand services and may have to consider reducing hours to existing clients. We are looking closely at the budget for transfer options within our III B funds and for potential cost savings to minimize the need to cut services.
- Our amazing volunteer, Ruth Pomeroy, contributed 90 hours in October and 70 hours in November counseling seniors on their Medicare options during open enrollment.

RSVP

- RSVP volunteers have contributed many hours and many items to the Montana Winter Ready Program including 33 lap robes for the Montana Veterans Home and local assisted living facilities; 113 baby quilts and 143 baby hats to local hospitals, the Health Department, the Flathead Food Bank and Hope Resource Center; 19 quilts to the Abbie Shelter and victims of the Colorado fires. Volunteer Diana Williams officially turned in her 1600th hat!
- 5 RSVP Santas were recruited to call 160+ kids as part of the Kalispell Parks and Rec “Santa Calling Program” on 12/13/12.
- Current volunteer projects include the Salvation Army Angel Tree Project, the Kalispell Senior Center giftwrapping fundraiser, the Literacy Program and various projects at the Central School Museum.
- Upcoming events:
 - Hot Cocoa Social (1/19/13): an appreciation event for volunteers at AOA, donation will be collected for the Veterans Food Pantry
 - Martin Luther King Day service projects (1/21/13): deliver donations for the Vet Food Pantry, Read for Peace collaborative effort with Americorp and a call-out to all RSVP volunteers to commit to 1 hour of volunteering on that day.

Senior Mobile Home Repair

- The Advisory meeting was held 12/11/12.
- Warm and dry continue to be the priorities this time of year. Since the last Board meeting the program has replaced windows, doors and furnace parts for multiple individuals.
- We received a \$500 donation from Northwestern Energy and have approximately \$13,000 available at this time for additional repairs.

Senior Centers

- A primary AOA focus is outreach to area Senior Centers to build relationships, extend support, and explore new opportunities for partnership. To that end:
 - Lisa attended the Kalispell Senior Center Board on 11/27/12 and made a brief presentation, met with center members participating in exercise class on 11/28 and spoke to the general membership on 11/29.
 - The Whitefish Community Center Board suggested and has offered to host a joint meeting of AOA and all of the board presidents in mid-February to begin a dialog on how we can best join together to meet the needs of seniors in the Flathead Valley. The goal is quarterly meetings of senior center leadership to plan and coordinate ongoing collaborative efforts.
 - Lisa will participate in the North Valley Senior Center Board meeting and other activities on 1/3-4/13.
 - AOA will invite senior center members from all areas to participate in focus groups as part of our strategic planning process.