



The Link



Connecting You to Richland County

R I C H L A N D C O U N T Y C O M M I S S I O N O N A G I N G

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- You may qualify for help with property taxes
- You can help shape the future of Richland County
- LIEAP applications are still available
- Steps toward Healthy Aging
- Take a photo tour of Crestwood

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MAKE 2016 YOUR BEST YEAR



The New Year is a great time to make a new start when it comes to your life. If you're making a New Year's Resolution this year, help increase your chances of success by making sure its realistic and enhances your life. Here are four resolutions that only require small steps but have a big impact.

1. Get Active! Take a walk everyday even if its just a short one. If you prefer to be around groups, join a fun sen-

ior oriented exercise class like the Arthritis Exercise Classes offered by the Commission on Aging. Just 20 minutes of physical activity each day can decrease your risk of developing diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease (AmericanTrails.org).

2. Write your grandchildren. In this day and age of electronics, email, and texts, there's something very special about receiving a handwritten letter.
3. Remember what you

loved about your older hobbies and start enjoying them again. Not only will you pass many pleasant hours, you may just conjure up some memories of when you last enjoyed it.

4. Become a volunteer. There are many volunteer opportunities to build upon your interests and you can choose whether you want a short or long term commitment. To find out more about volunteer opportunities near you, call RSVP at 433-2207.

MEALS ON WHEELS SURVEYS

The Sidney Meals on Wheels Program is taking part in an important research project for the US Dept of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living. The purpose of the study is to better understand how nutrition services for older Americans help the people who receive them. Mathematica Policy

Research, an independent research company, is conducting the study.

An interviewer from Mathematica may call you to schedule an in-person interview for later during the week. The interview will include questions about what you eat and drink and about your participation in the meal program. Your

experiences will represent thousands of others who could not be included in the study so your voice matters. We encourage you to visit with the interviewer if they call.

**The interview will NOT ask for your home address or any personal information. Never give out that type of information over the phone.*

SENIOR COALITION CAMPAIGN

The Richland County Senior Coalition would like to thank all the businesses and individuals who donated during its annual fundraising campaign. The support from the community over the past few years has been overwhelming and is the reason the Coalition has been able to award numerous grants and help seven seniors with ongoing assistance.

The Senior Coalition focuses on the health of Seniors and providing services to enable them to stay in their own homes and age

with dignity. Some of the things the Coalition has been able to help with are:

- Medication set ups by a licensed nurse
- In home personal care
- Lifeline monitoring
- Emergency travel expenses
- Durable medical equipment
- Service referrals
- Handicap accessories
- Fall assessments

The Senior Coalition is also working toward starting new programs that will benefit all

seniors. “Stepping On” is a balance

training class that the Coalition and the Commission on Aging hopes to initiate in the very near future. The class is a fun, easy program that promotes stability and camaraderie among its participants. Best of all its suitable for all fitness levels! Watch for information on the new “Stepping On” program in our next newsletter or call the Commission on Aging at 433-3701.



PROPERTY TAX ASSISTANCE

With many costs still rising in our area a lot of seniors are feeling the pressure. One issue of particular concern to many seniors is the rise in property taxes. While tax increases are often times necessary, they are never meant to force anyone out of their homes.

Seniors on a fixed income that would experience a detrimental effect from increases may qualify to get a reduction in their property taxes. You can get a copy of the Property Tax Assistance Application (PTAP) at the Treasures Office in the Courthouse or online at <http://revenue.mt.gov/propertytax-relief>.

The dead line for filing this year’s form is April 15th. To qualify you must own, or currently be under contract to purchase a home or mobile/manufactured home and be able to furnish proof of income. You must also meet the following income guidelines:

- Single: Income must be under \$21,032/year
- Married or Head of Household: Income must be less than \$28,043/year

If you need help filling out this form you came call Jodi Berry at the Richland County Commission on Aging (433-3701) or Karen O’Dell at Action for Eastern Montana (433-4967).

We would also like to remind seniors that do not file income taxes that they may apply for the 2015 Montana Elderly Homeowner/renter credit. This is done by filling out Form 2EC and filing it with the Montana Department of Revenue. If you have questions please call 433-4967.

BE HEARD AT YOUR TOWN HALL

This year's Countywide Conference will have a different look and feel. Rather than one large conference, there will be a series of shorter ones in each Richland County Community. Earlier this year the Richland County Communities In Action conducted a needs assessment among a sampling of Richland County residents. The issues that were highlighted during that assessment will be the focus of the "Town Hall" meetings and help

shape our Strategic Plan.

While all of the issues concern our county community as a whole, many address senior concerns specifically. Because of that, **senior participation at these meetings is strongly encouraged.** This is your chance to provide input and help shape the direction of our county.

Often times, seniors have a unique perspective and personal knowledge of how certain issues affect our older

population. Because of this, their input is invaluable. Please look for information as the Town Hall dates are set (they will be held in March) and consider attending to be part of the future of Richland County. For more information you can visit www.richland.org—>Future of Richland County or you can call the Health Department at 433-2207.



SERVICE SPOTLIGHT: RCTS

For the past 10 years Richland County Transportation has been striving to meet the transit needs of Richland County residents. From everyday rides to work, school, shopping and appointments to bigger trips taking in the Medora Musical or the Fort Peck Theater, RCTS is proud of the impact it has on its passengers lives. RCTS also prides itself on being part of the community; participating in parades and scheduling special trips to tour area Christmas light displays.

RCTS is open to everyone and operates from 7am to 6pm Monday through Friday and from 8am to 1pm on Sundays. Rides that are booked by 4pm the day prior to travel are just \$1/stop. Rides for same-day travel are \$5/stop.

RCTS can book rides up to a year in advance and can accommodate standing orders such as going to the hair dresser every Friday at a specific time or being picked up daily for work. If you'd like more information or to book a ride, call 433-RIDE (7433).



RCTS's entry for the 2016 Sidney Parade of Lights



7 WINTER SAFETY TIPS



During the winter months, ice, snow and cold temperatures can make life challenging for everyone. Slippery sidewalks and cold weather can cause a wide range of injuries and illnesses -- especially for seniors.

Here is some helpful advice for preventing common winter dangers that the elderly population faces.

1. Avoid Slipping on Ice – Icy, snowy roads and sidewalks make it easy to slip and fall. Make sure to wear shoes with good traction and non-skid soles, and stay inside until the roads are clear. Replace a worn cane tip to make walking easier. Take off shoes as soon as you return indoors because often snow and ice attach to the soles and, once melted, can lead to slippery conditions inside.

2. Dress for Warmth - Cold temperatures can lead to frostbite and hypothermia -- a condition where the body temperature dips too low. Accord-

ing to the CDC, more than half of hypothermia-related deaths were of people over the age of 65. So don't let indoor temperatures go too low and dress in layers. Going outside? Wear warm socks, a heavy coat, a warm hat, gloves and a scarf. In very cold temperatures, cover all exposed skin. Use a scarf to cover your mouth and protect your lungs.

3. Fight Wintertime Depression- Because it can be difficult and dangerous to get around, many seniors have less contact with others during cold months. This can breed feelings of loneliness and isolation. To help avoid these issues, family members can check in on seniors as often as possible; even a short, daily phone call can make a big difference. Seniors can also arrange a check-in system with neighbors and friends, where each person looks in on one or two others daily.

4. Check the Car- Driving during the winter can be hazardous for anyone. But it is especially dangerous for older people, who

may not drive as often anymore or whose reflexes may not be as quick as they once were. Get your car serviced before winter-time hits -- or ask a family member to bring it to a garage for you. Checking things like the oil, tires, battery and wipers can make a big difference on winter roads.

5. Prepare for Power Outages- Winter storms can lead to power outages. Make sure you have easy access to flashlights and a battery-powered radio in case the power goes out. Stockpile warm blankets. Longer power outages can spoil the food in your refrigerator and freezer so keep a supply of non-perishable foods that can be eaten cold on hand. If the power goes out, wear several layers of clothing, including a hat. Move around a lot to raise your body temperature.

6. Eat a Varied Diet- Because people spend more time indoors and may eat a smaller variety of foods, nutritional deficits -- especially Vitamin D deficiency -- can be a problem. .

7. Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning- Using a fireplace, gas heater or lanterns can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning. Ensure your safety by checking the batteries on your carbon monoxide detector and buying an updated one if you need to.

The most important tip to keep in mind during the colder months is to ask for help. If you need to clear your property of snow and ice, don't hesitate to ask a family member or neighbor, or hire a professional. Arrange rides to the grocery store and doctor's appointments. Richland County Transportation (433-7433) offers door to door service specifically for seniors. Don't be afraid to reach out for help.

Wintertime certainly poses challenges for seniors, but with a bit of planning and awareness, you will stay healthy and experience the joys of springtime soon enough.



FIGHT THE CHILL WITH LIEAP

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) through Action for Eastern Montana is still accepting applications. The LIEAP program is designed to help Low-Income families and individuals with a portion of their heating bills during the heating season (October-April). It doesn't matter if you rent or own your home, the eligibility is based on your income and resources.

One of the main questions potential clients ask of the LIEAP program is "If I get LIEAP, will it take assistance away from someone who might need it more?" The answer is NO. If you qual-

ify for the program based on your income and resources, the state of Montana has already put aside some assistance for you. If you don't take that assistance it doesn't help anyone and only hurts your household.

If you are approved for LIEAP, a one-time payment will be sent to your energy provider which will be posted to your account as a credit. You may use this credit to pay your charges during the winter months. If you do not use all of it, the remainder will be returned to the state of Montana.

For questions about the LIEAP program or to apply please call

Action for Eastern Montana at 1-800-227-0703.

LIEAP 2015-2016 Income Guide

Number in Household	Upper Income Limit
1	\$21,441
2	\$28,038
3	\$34,635
4	\$41,232
5	\$54,426

If you are a LIEAP eligible home you may also qualify for the Weatherization Program after an Energy Audit is done to your home. Applications for LIEAP can be submitted through March.

HARVEST FOR SENIORS

The Commission on Aging, Richland County Transportation, Senior Companion, and Retired Senior Volunteer Programs were able to deliver almost 400 servings of vegetables to Richland County Seniors during this year's "Harvest for Seniors." Event organizers say "We are so happy with the community support and the generous donations the project received again this year. Thanks so much to everyone who donated and thank you to everyone who helped deliver, making this program a success once again."

The table to the right shows the numbers of servings of each item delivered during 2015's HFS.



Tomato	88	Potato	11
Zucchini	73	Squash	32
Cucumber	89	Carrot	13
Beans	7	Beets	5
Corn	4	Lettuce	13
Pepper	10	Onion	19
Misc. Veggies	8	Swiss Chard	12

LIFE AT THE LODGE HEALTHY AGING

SUBMITTED BY KATHY JENSEN

As we grow older there are many life changes above the regular daily stresses, such as loss of a loved one, moving after retirement and physical changes. Then you toss in other things like nutrition, physical activity, sleep, social activities, spirituality, risk factors and prevention strategies.

YIKES! And what about all these doctor visits and medicines that are necessary to keep us healthy?

So, how do we find the formula for healthy aging? First of all, no matter how old you are, coping with change is difficult, especially for older adults when our independence is threatened. According to helpguide.org, healthy aging might simply mean “continually re-inventing yourself, finding new things

you enjoy, learning to adapt to change, staying physically and socially active and feeling connected to your community and loved ones”. That doesn’t sound so difficult does it? Trying to juggle it all seems overwhelming but there are some things you can do.

Focus on the things you are grateful for.

The longer you live, the more you lose. But as you lose people and things, life becomes even more precious and you stop taking things for granted.

Acknowledge and express your feelings.

You may have a hard time showing strong emotions. Don’t deny what you are going through. Try talking to a close friend or writing in a journal.

Accept the things you can’t change. Many

things in life are beyond our control. Instead of stressing over them, face your limitations with dignity and humor.

Look for the silver lining.

When facing major challenges, try to look at them as opportunities for personal growth.

Take daily action to deal with life’s challenges.

When challenges seem too big to handle, sweeping them under the carpet often appears easier but ignoring the problem doesn’t make it go away but can allow anxiety to build.

Next, stay socially active:

Learning: Take a class at the library, museum or on-line. Lifelong learning provides social interactions, personal satisfaction, and a source of knowledge.

Leisure: from playing cards with friends to playing games on the internet there are many ways to enjoy yourself while challenging your mind.

Work: Finding a part-time job would be an enjoyable way to get out amongst others and feel engaged.

Working flexible hours, finding meaningful work, and having fun really makes a difference!

Volunteer: Volunteerism can contribute to healthy aging as well. This way, you control your hours and gain a sense of purpose and satisfaction.

Let’s start the New Year by being positive and aging healthy. Everyone is getting older every day so let’s make the best of the days to come!



Left: Apartment kitchen
Bottom: Main lobby

Above: Apartment bedroom.
Right: Main sitting room



CRESTWOOD...IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK

Submitted by Kelly Wilkinson

It's Not What You Think.....

We often hear, "Crestwood is for people who need care" Crestwood is an independent living apartment complex for those 62 and older or who are deemed disabled. Many people are under the impression that Crestwood is an assisted living facility. Crestwood is just like living in your own home or apartment.

If you need support services you are linked to community agencies just as you would in your own home. Support Services can include a referral to : Sidney Health Centers Visiting Nurse Program, Angel Aides, Home and Community Based Services, Richland County Transportation, Richland County Senior Coalition, just to name a few. Services are not provided by Crestwood or its staff. Many people who call Crestwood home are completely independent and do not have any services.

Crestwood does offer some amenities such as a noon meal Monday – Friday, weekly BINGO, Church Services, and special events. There is a common area for socializing and a warm place to wait for transportation. A Support Service Coordinator is available to assist you with Medicare, and Medicaid paper work, and helping you determine which support services would be of benefit and how to access those services. Crestwood is independent living with a little extra, Check us out today. Stop in and take a look around, we would love to give you a tour.

Brandi Sander Site Manger
Kelly Wilkinson Support Service Coordinator



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**RICHLAND COUNTY
COMMISSION ON
AGING**

1201 W Holly St, Ste 1
Sidney, MT 59270

Phone: 406-3701
TTY: 800-335-7592
Fax: 406-433-5800
E-mail: jberry@richland.org

Bringing Seniors and Services Together

**THANK YOU!! TO OUR MEALS ON
WHEELS VOLUNTEERS!!!**

OCTOBER

THE PEOPLES
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH

THE LIONS

KIWANIS

NOVEMBER

KIWANIS

THE MASONS

FRED BARKLEY

RICHLAND COUNTY
COA

WOMEN OF THE MOOSE

DECEMBER

BILL FORRESTER
STAN LINBLOOM

NIKOLE LEFORS
THE CHURCH OF THE
LDS

RICHLAND COUNTY
LAW ENFORCEMENT
R.S.V.P

FOREVER BUDS
RICHLAND RASCALS

THE ELKS



Thank you very much to all of our
volunteer deliverers! We could not
provide this service with out you!!