



**In This Volume:**

- From Our Executive Director
- Delaying Medicare Part B Enrollment?
- Mankato Office Spotlight
- Falls Prevention Awareness
- Advisory Council on Aging Vacancies
- How Can Senior LinkAge Line® Help Me Stay At Home?
- Stretching Your Food Dollar
- Remember Your Elderly Neighbor...
- MNRAAA Staff and Board

**Volume II, Issue 3**  
**07.27.2011**

MINNESOTA RIVER AREA AGENCY ON AGING®, INC.

# MNRAAA NEWS

## From Our Executive Director

Dear Readers:

With the arrival of summer, many of us think about relaxing in a lounge chair under an umbrella on the beach, with a cold class of lemonade and a good book. There are so many books that have recently been released that are beckoning us to visit our local library or bookstore. But, in addition to the “lighter” summer reading, there have also been several new reports released related to aging issues.

Transform 2010, a project of the Minnesota Department of Human Services in partnership with the Board on Aging and Department of Health, conducted a survey of Minnesota boomers, individuals born from 1946 through 1964. The survey was conducted between July and September 2010. It focused on Minnesota boomers’ thoughts about work and housing. It also looked at the way in which personal health, finances and caregiving responsibilities impact boomers’ decisions about work and housing. You can access the *Transform 2010 DATA REPORT – Baby Boomer Survey* by going to



[www.mnaging.org](http://www.mnaging.org). The report can be found under “Project Transform 2010”.

A second report recently released is the *Genworth 2011 Cost of Care Survey*. Genworth surveyed the cost of long term care across the United States to help individuals plan appropriately for the potential cost of long term care. Home care providers, adult day health care facilities, assisted living facilities and nursing homes were surveyed. Information is available by state. The *Genworth 2011 Cost of Care Survey*

is available at [www.genworth.com/content/products/long\\_term\\_care/long\\_term\\_care/cost\\_of\\_care.html](http://www.genworth.com/content/products/long_term_care/long_term_care/cost_of_care.html).

Happy Reading,

Linda Giersdorf



**Mission Statement**

The Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging®, Inc. is the gateway to resources for older adults, caregivers and service providers in the twenty-seven counties of southwest Minnesota.

# When Is It Okay To Delay Medicare Part B Enrollment?

Many more people are choosing to work past age 65. When a person turns 65 they are eligible to enroll in Medicare, even though they are not eligible to take their full Social Security Retirement Benefit. If you or your spouse are **actively employed** and have group health insurance coverage through your employer or union based on current employment you are eligible to delay enrollment into Medicare Part B. You are then allowed to enroll into Medicare Part B during a Special Enrollment Period (SEP). You can sign up:



can enroll into Medicare during the General Enrollment Period, January 1 to March 31 each year. Enrollment becomes effective July 1 of the same year and you will be assessed a premium penalty.

If you have a question about whether you are eligible to delay Medicare Part B enrollment contact the Senior LinkAge Line® for assistance by phone or in-person. The Senior LinkAge Line® is a free service of the Minnesota Board on Aging, as well as the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) for Minnesota. Specialists provide one-to-one assistance with all Medicare and health insurance issues and also provide in-depth long-term care options counseling. Call 1-800-333-2433 for assistance or go to [www.MinnesotaHelp.info](http://www.MinnesotaHelp.info)® to chat live with a Senior LinkAge Line® specialist.

- Anytime you are still covered by the employer or union group health plan through current or active employment, or
- During the 8 months following the month the employer or union group health plan coverage ends or when the employment ends (whichever was first).

There is often some confusion for people whose coverage ends; such as because of a job loss. Electing to take COBRA benefits does not qualify as “active employment” and therefore, does not stop your 8 month SEP from starting. Therefore, it is best to enroll into Medicare during your SEP. If you do not enroll into Medicare when you are first eligible or during a SEP you

## Mankato Office Spotlight

In Minnesota, area agencies on aging have three key roles; information and assistance, system development, and administration. Because MNRAAA has offices in Mankato, Slayton and Willmar, we thought it would be helpful to highlight each office, including their individual roles and staff. Some roles are carried out on behalf of MNRAAA’s twenty-seven county service area (known as the SW PSA) and other roles are carried out in a smaller geographic area. This issue of MNRAAA NEWS will highlight the Mankato office. The Slayton and Willmar offices will be highlighted in upcoming issues.

(Continued on Page 4)

### Your Opinion Matters!

Please share your feedback with us. If you would like to read about specific topics in future MNRAAA News or to request MNRAAA News by email, contact us at:

[erica@rndc.org](mailto:erica@rndc.org) or  
507.389.8879



# Falls Prevention Awareness Day September 23, 2011

# FALLS FREE™

National Falls Prevention Awareness Day is observed the first day of fall to promote and increase public awareness about how to prevent and reduce falls among older adults. Falls Prevention Awareness Day is September 23, 2011.

Source: <http://www.healthyagingprograms.org>

## Advisory Council on Aging (ACA)

The MNRAAA offices (Mankato, Slayton and Willmar) are currently taking applications for current council vacancies as well as applications for the 2012 council openings. Terms are 3 years and will begin January 1, 2012 (current openings will begin immediately). Meetings take place approximately six times per year. For meeting location and application deadline, contact your local MNRAAA office listed below.

### Northwest Area

Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Swift & Yellow Medicine Counties

#### Current Council Vacancies:

- Big Stone County age 60+
- Chippewa County age 60+
- Lac qui Parle County age 60+
- Swift County age 60+
- Minority Representative any age
- Nursing Home Representative any age
- Public Health/Social Service Rep. any age

### Northeast Area

Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker & Renville Counties

#### Current Council Vacancies:

- Kandiyohi County age 60+
- Nursing Home Representative any age
- Public/Private Agency Representative any age

**For additional information regarding the Northwest ACA and Northeast ACA or to request an application, please contact [Kate](#) at 320.235.8504.**

### Southwest Area

Cottonwood, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood & Rock Counties

#### Current Council Vacancies:

- Lyon County age 60+
- Redwood County age 60+

#### 2012 Council Openings:

- Minority Representative any age
- County Social Service/Public Health Rep. any age

**For additional information regarding the Southwest ACA or to request an application, please contact [Robin](#) at 507.836.1642.**

### Southeast Area

Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca & Watonwan Counties

#### Current Council Vacancy:

- Brown County age 60+

#### 2012 Council Openings:

- Le Sueur County age 60+
- County Social Service/Public Health Rep. any age
- Nursing Home Representative any age
- Public/Private Agency Representative any age

**For additional information regarding the Southeast ACA or to request an application, please contact [Erica](#) at 507.389.8879.**

(Continued from Page 2 Spotlight)

## Information and Assistance Through the Senior LinkAge Line®

Robin Thompson and Stephanie McCabe are Senior Outreach Specialists. They provide one-to-one assistance through the State of Minnesota's Senior LinkAge Line® (SLL) system, a free information and assistance service. They are also available to conduct community presentations such as "Welcome to Medicare" and "Don't Be a Target of Healthcare and Consumer Fraud". Robin and Stephanie primarily work in Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca and Watonwan Counties (nine county area). In addition, Robin is the SLL Volunteer Coordinator for the SW PSA. Stephanie is also a Chronic Disease Self-Management Regional Coordinator and Trainer and is available to teach classes throughout the nine county area. Robin has been with MNRAAA since 2005. Stephanie has been with MNRAAA since 2009. If you would like to schedule an appointment to learn more about the SLL, or schedule a community presentation, contact Robin or Stephanie.



[Robin Thompson](#)



[Stephanie McCabe](#)

Heather Lincoln is the MinnesotaHelp Network™ Community Living Specialist and works with the Return to Community Initiative (RTC). Heather assists private-pay nursing home residents who have expressed a desire to return to the community. She is available to provide long-term care options counseling, develop a community living support plan in collaboration with the discharge planning team and provide service coordination for consumers. RTC also provides in-home and telephone based follow-up for up to 5 years for consumers who discharge back to the community. Heather works throughout the SW PSA and has been with MNRAAA since November, 2009. For more information about the Return to Community Initiative, contact Heather.



[Heather Lincoln](#)

## System Development

Elaine Spain and Gail Gilman-Waldner are system developers and work primarily in the nine county area. Elaine and Gail collaborate with communities, counties and health and social service providers to increase local capacity to meet the needs of an aging population. They assist with the coordinated development of caregiver supports, volunteer-based services, and community resources. Elaine is also a Master Trainer for the evidenced based programs Powerful Tools for Caregivers and A Matter of Balance. Master Trainers are able to teach others to facilitate these classes for older adults in their local communities. She is a trainer for the Minnesota Caregiver curriculum and the T-Care Assessment process and is available to provide training throughout the SW PSA. She is also responsible for the coordination of the Veteran Directed Home and Community Based Services program. This program targets Veterans of any age who are enrolled in the Sioux Falls Veterans Administration Medical Center, reside in Lac qui Parle, Yellow Medicine, Lyon, Lincoln, Pipestone, Murray, Cottonwood, Rock, Nobles, Jackson and Martin Counties, and need nursing facility level of care. In addition to system development, Gail also manages the Statewide Family Caregiver Public Awareness Campaign on behalf of the area agencies on aging in Minnesota. Elaine was a system developer with the Region Nine Area Agency on Aging (R9 AAA) from 1999 through 2004. Gail was a system developer with the R9 AAA from November through December 2004. Both have been with MNRAAA since 2005. If you would like to discuss developing or enhancing a program for older adults, receiving information about or scheduling classes or have questions about the Veterans program, contact Elaine or Gail.



[Elaine Spain](#)



[Gail Gilman-Waldner](#)

(Continues on Page 5)





(Continued from Page 4 Spotlight)

**Administration**

The administrative functions, including grant/contract management, are located in the Mankato office. Rhonda Hiller Fjeldberg is the grant/contract manager and works with Title III-funded providers across the SW PSA. She was a planner/grants manager with the R9 AAA from 1989 through 2004 and has been with MNRAAA since 2005. If you would like information about Title III funding or Title III programs that are currently funded by MNRAAA, feel free to contact Rhonda.

Erica Gahlon is the administrative assistant and is responsible for the day-to-day administrative functions in the Mankato office. She is also responsible for several administrative functions on behalf of the SW PSA, including maintenance of the MNRAAA website and publication of MNRAAA NEWS. Erica was the administrative assistant with the R9 AAA from 2002 through 2004 and has been with MNRAAA since 2005. If you have comments about MNRAAA NEWS, contact Erica.

Linda Giersdorf serves as the executive director and has the overall responsibility for MNRAAA. She served in a variety of capacities, including director, with the R9 AAA from 1983 through 2004. She has been with MNRAAA since 2005. If you have questions about MNRAAA, contact Linda.

Staff from the Mankato office has approximately 88 years of experience working with area agencies on aging. MNRAAA encourages you to utilize their expertise!



Erica Gahlon



Linda Giersdorf

The Minnesota State Fair is one of the largest and best-attended expositions in the world, attracting nearly 1.8 million visitors annually. Showcasing Minnesota's finest agriculture, art and industry, the Great Minnesota Get-Together is always Twelve Days of Fun Ending Labor Day.

Will you be one of the 1.8 million to visit the Great Minnesota Get-Together? Look for the Senior LinkAge Line® booth in the Education Building. We'll see you there!

**How Can Senior LinkAge Line® Help Me Stay at Home?**

The Senior LinkAge Line® provides a variety of services for older adults, persons with disabilities and their caregivers. Many people don't realize that the Senior LinkAge Line® is able to provide long term care options counseling. Counselors help consumers and their family members understand what options are available to meet their long term care needs, including identifying what those needs may be. Consumers and family members receive assistance in setting goals, making choices and planning for in-home services in keeping with their own individual strengths, needs and resources.



If you or someone you know is interested in talking to someone about their long term care needs call the Senior LinkAge Line® at 1-800-333-2433. Help is available over the phone or in-person.

**Aug. 25-Labor Day, Sept. 5, 2011**

**MINNESOTA STATE FAIR**



## Stretching Your Food Dollar

Evidence shows that eating healthy will improve your quality of life. One of the best places to find fresh healthy food is at your local farmers' market. Shopping at your local farmers' market not only allows you access to healthy locally grown food, but it also stretches your food dollar.

Some of the farmers' markets in Minnesota now accept food assistance funds from the Food Support Program (formally known as Food Stamps). Funds are issued through an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card (looks like a debit card). The Minnesota Department of Human Services estimates that only one in four eligible seniors in the state are on the Food Support Program. If your income is limited contact your local county human service office to see if you qualify.

In addition, some of the farmers' markets are also accepting vouchers from the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP). The SFMNP provides seniors on limited incomes with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods at participating local farmers' markets. To obtain these vouchers seniors need to contact their local Nutrition Assistance Program for Seniors (NAPS).

The Mankato Farmers' Market is now accepting EBT, Debit & Credit Cards. They are also accepting Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) & Senior FMNP's Fruit and Vegetable Vouchers (FVV's). The Mankato Farmers' Market runs May through October; Saturdays 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and Tuesdays & Thursdays 3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. You can find out more information about farmers' markets in your area at the Minnesota Farmers' Market Association website, [www.mfma.org](http://www.mfma.org).

To find out more information about the Food Support Program, the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program or the Nutrition Assistance Program for Seniors contact the Senior LinkAge line® at 1-800-333-2433. Help is available over the phone or in-person.



## Remember Your Elderly Neighbor...



water and ice. Even offering to help with usual outdoor chores can prevent potentially life-threatening heat exhaustion or heatstroke.

Symptoms and signs can begin suddenly after prolonged exposure to extreme heat, excessive exercise or from dehydration. Watch for the following indications:

- Feeling dizzy or faint
- Nauseous

Check in on the elderly when its hot outside. Drop in and make sure their air conditioning is working and that they have plenty of cold

- Low grade fever
- Headache
- Heat cramps
- Fatigue
- Rapid, weak heartbeat
- Low blood pressure
- Heavy sweating



If you suspect heat exhaustion:

- Get out of the sun into shade or indoors with air conditioning
- Loosen or remove clothing
- Drink cool water (avoid caffeine & alcohol)
- Soak in cool water
- Seek medical help

# Our Staff

## Mankato Office:

10 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 3 • PO Box 3323  
 Mankato, MN 56002-3323  
**Ph:** 507.389.8879 • **Fx:** 507.387.7105  
**Hours:** 8 AM - 4:30 PM • Monday - Friday

- Linda Giersdorf, Executive Director  
[linda@rncd.org](mailto:linda@rncd.org) 507.389.8866
- Rhonda Hiller Fjeldberg, Grant/Contract Manager  
[rhonda@rncd.org](mailto:rhonda@rncd.org) 507.389.8862
- Erica Gahlon, Administrative Assistant  
[erica@rncd.org](mailto:erica@rncd.org) 507.389.8879
- Robin Thompson, Senior Outreach Specialist  
[robint@rncd.org](mailto:robint@rncd.org) 1.800.333.2433 x:82016
- Gail Gilman-Waldner, Program Developer  
[ggwaldner@rncd.org](mailto:ggwaldner@rncd.org) 507.389.8869
- Elaine Spain, Program Developer  
[espain@rncd.org](mailto:espain@rncd.org) 507.389.8860
- Stephanie McCabe, Senior Outreach Specialist  
[stephanie@rncd.org](mailto:stephanie@rncd.org) 1.800.333.2433 x: 82004
- Heather Lincoln, Community Living Specialist  
[heather@rncd.org](mailto:heather@rncd.org) 1.800.333.2433 x: 82007

## Southeast Area



**L to R Back Row:** Heather Lincoln, Robin Thompson, Erica Gahlon, Stephanie McCabe  
**L to R Front Row:** Rhonda Hiller Fjeldberg, Linda Giersdorf, Elaine Spain (Gail Gilman-Waldner not pictured)

## Slayton Office:

2401 Broadway Ave., Suite 2 • Slayton, MN 56172  
**Ph:** 507.836.8547 • **Fx:** 507.836.8866  
**Hours:** 8 AM - 4:30 PM • Monday - Friday

- Robin Weis, Aging Program Director  
[rlinkage@swrdc.org](mailto:rlinkage@swrdc.org) 507.836.1642
- Gail Radke, Contact Center Coordinator/Sr. Outreach Specialist  
[gailr@swrdc.org](mailto:gailr@swrdc.org) 1.800.333.2433 x: 82006
- Linda Tobias, Client Services Center  
[lindat@swrdc.org](mailto:lindat@swrdc.org) 1.800.333.2433 x: 82012
- Julie Stewart, Information & Assistance Specialist  
[julies@swrdc.org](mailto:julies@swrdc.org) 1.800.333.2433 x: 82008
- Nicole Brandt, Information & Assistance Specialist  
[nicole@swrdc.org](mailto:nicole@swrdc.org) 1.800.333.2433 x: 82020
- Katrina Gillette, Information & Assistance Specialist  
[katrina@swrdc.org](mailto:katrina@swrdc.org) 1.800.333.2433 x: 82022

## Southwest Area



**L to R Back Row:** (Danielle Comstock, formerly of MnRAAA), Julie Stewart, Linda Tobias, Nicole Brandt  
**L to R Front Row:** Gail Radke, Robin Weis, Katie Gillette

## Willmar Office:

333 Sixth Street SW, Suite 2 • Willmar, MN 56201  
**Ph:** 507.836.8547 • **Fx:** 507.836.8866  
**Hours:** 8 AM - 4:30 PM • Monday - Friday

- Kate Selseth, Aging Program Director  
[kate.selseth@mrrdc.org](mailto:kate.selseth@mrrdc.org) 320.235.8504 x: 251
- Ashley Ellingson, Senior Outreach Specialist  
[ashley.ellingson@mrrdc.org](mailto:ashley.ellingson@mrrdc.org) 1.800.333.2433 x: 82024

## Northwest & Northeast Area



**L to R:** Ashley Ellingson, Kate Selseth



**Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging®, Inc.**

PO Box 3323  
Mankato MN 56002-3323

*Return Service Request*



**Our Board**

- DuWayne Underthun, *Vice Chair*  
Willmar
- Maureen Melgaard-Schneider, *Secretary*  
Atwater
- Susan Meyer  
Olivia
- Francis Schweiss, *Alternate*  
Fairfax
- Howard Janssen  
Ortonville
- James Broich  
Sleepy Eye
- Candace Fenske  
Madelia
- Daniel Sasaro Brewer  
Lakefield
- Sylvan Struck, *Treasurer*  
Sherburn
- Lori Ruthenbeck  
Mankato
- Jim Berg, *Alternate*  
New Ulm
- Bill Sauer, *Chair*  
Fulda
- David Benson  
Bigelow
- Maddy Forsberg  
Slayton
- Larry Hansen, *Alternate*  
Tyler