

Alaskan Seniors Living Longer Growing Stronger

from the Alaska Commission on Aging



Sarah Palin
Governor



Karleen K. Jackson
Commissioner

Double Issue
April/May-June/July 2007

From Shut-Out to Victory: SeniorCare Saga Ends in Creation of New, Improved Program

After a wild roller coaster ride for seniors and senior advocates, in the end the power of public opinion prevailed. The 2007 Alaska Legislature had adjourned its regular session and left Juneau without so much as a tip of the hat to seniors anxiously awaiting re-authorization of the Senior Care program, which was set to sunset on June 30th. However, Governor Sarah Palin quickly stepped in to extend the program through the month of July and to call a special session of the Legislature to deal exclusively with this issue on June 26th. After a seven-hour session that day, all but a handful of legislators agreed on a new senior benefits program to take effect on August 1, 2007.

The expanded senior benefits program will pay a higher monthly benefit amount keyed to income level and will be open to a greater number



AARP PHOTO

Rally in the streets: Seniors and advocates line Anchorage's Fifth Avenue in front of the Egan Center on Tuesday, June 26th to proclaim their support for continuation of a senior benefits program as the Legislature convenes for a special session on that issue.

of eligible seniors than the Senior Care program. The new program will benefit seniors with incomes up to 175% of the federal poverty threshold for Alaska, has no asset test and no sunset date, and will pay \$250 to the neediest seniors (those with incomes below 75% of the federal poverty threshold for Alaska). The new program is expected to help over 10,000 Alaska seniors. The old Senior Care

cash benefit program paid \$120 to seniors (age 65 and older) with incomes under 135% of the federal poverty threshold for Alaska. The program carried a sunset date, requiring a struggle for re-authorization every couple of years. And an asset limitation left a number of very low-income seniors ineligible for reasons such as ownership of remote property they were unable to sell. About 7,000 seniors received monthly payments under the old program.

The new senior benefits payment program will no longer be referred to as Senior Care, which is the name of a pre-existing private business that has no connection to the program.

Roll Reversal

The Alaska Commission on Aging, the Alaska Aging

(Continued on page 16)

**Alaskan Seniors:
Living Longer, Growing Stronger**
is a bimonthly publication of the
Alaska Commission on Aging
(ACoA).

The mission of the Alaska
Commission on Aging is to advocate
for policies, programs, and services
that promote the dignity and
independence of Alaska's seniors
and help them maintain a meaningful
quality of life.

Commissioners

Sharon Howerton-Clark,
Vice Chair
Homer

Patricia Branson
Kodiak

Lillian Boen Kasnick
Sitka

Betty Keegan
Wrangell

Banarsi Lal
Fairbanks

Iver Malutin
Kodiak

Paula Pawlowski
Anchorage

Edward Zastrow
Ketchikan

Rod Moline,
Div. of Senior & Disabilities Services
Juneau

Michael Black, Dept. of Commerce,
Community & Economic
Development, Anchorage

Executive Director

Denise Daniello

Staff

Planner II

MaryAnn VandeCastle

Contact Us

Phone: (907) 465-3250

Fax: (907) 465-1398

Web site: www.AlaskaAging.org

Mail: P.O. Box 110693

Juneau, AK 99811-0693

You can read issues online at
www.AlaskaAging.org/publications.htm
To be added to the mailing list, contact:
[MaryAnn_VandeCastle@health.
state.ak.us](mailto:MaryAnn_VandeCastle@health.state.ak.us)



Director's Corner

By Denise Daniello

Senior Political Muscle Makes All the Difference!

At the close of the 2007 legislative session, many people were unpleasantly surprised, if not angered and outraged, that the Legislature failed to renew Senior Care, a program initiated by the Murkowski administration that provided \$120 monthly payments to about 7,000 low-income Alaska seniors. After long and contentious debate on whether to extend Senior Care past its June 30th sunset date, the Legislature gaveled out without taking any action to continue the program. As it turned out, this lack of action generated a powerful reaction that motivated scores of seniors, senior providers, and advocates from across the state to mount pressure on their legislators to continue the program.

If there is one lesson learned from the recent legislative session regarding the senior assistance issue, it is "Never underestimate the power and influence of serious senior advocacy." Seniors and senior advocates flexed their political muscle by writing their legislators, testifying at hearings, submitting letters

to the editor, and even taking to the streets to protest, carrying signs in support of a senior benefits program to help the most vulnerable older Alaskans. During the public hearing, we heard stories of the importance of Senior Care in helping older people make ends meet - from paying utility bills, and making rent on time, to buying food for themselves and their grandchildren. Senior advocates articulated their views clearly, consistently, and loudly, capturing the public's and the media's attention. And it made a difference!

On June 26th, 2007, during a historic one-day special session, the Legislature passed the new Senior Benefits Payment Program in Anchorage at the Egan Center. The new program, beginning August 1st, will serve more seniors, including those with incomes up to 175% of the federal poverty threshold for Alaska. Seniors with incomes up to \$22,348 for a single person or \$29,960 for a couple will be eligible for the new program this year. (The Senior Care program had covered only those with incomes below \$16,133 for a single person or \$21,641 for a couple - 135% of the 2005 poverty threshold.) The new Senior Benefits program will also

(Continued on page 3)

Director's Corner
(Continued from page 2)

raise the flat monthly benefit of \$120 under the former Senior Care program and provide a three-tiered monthly benefit of \$125, \$175, or \$250 depending on household income.

The Division of Public Assistance is developing a new application form for the Senior Benefits Program, in addition to a "short form" for current Senior Care recipients who want to continue their senior assistance benefits. The forms, when available, will be distributed to senior centers or can be accessed online at www.seniorcare.alaska.gov, or obtained by calling the toll-free number 1-888-352-4150.

We thank Governor Palin for authorizing the one-month extension of the current Senior Care program to allow additional time for lawmakers to pass legislation continuing senior assistance benefits. We also thank Representative Mike Hawker and Senator Donald Olson, authors of the working legislation that provided the vehicle for passage of the new Senior Benefits program, as well as the legislators who supported this most important legislation for Alaska seniors.

In addition to our advocacy work this session, the Commission has been very busy the last three months. Activities included submitting the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services, FY 2008 – FY 2011

to the U.S. Administration on Aging for its approval (which was received during the last week of June), completing a successful legislative audit review by the Division of Legislative Audit, holding biweekly legislative teleconferences during session, celebrating Older Americans Month in May 2007 authorized by Governor Palin's executive proclamation, and planning and holding a Commission meeting in Fairbanks in May (including outreach visits with seniors and providers in Nenana, North Pole, Salcha, and Delta Junction as well as Fairbanks). Over the summer we will be developing and implementing an advocacy plan for FY 2009, planning Commission goals and activities for the coming year, launching the Healthy Body, Healthy Brain Campaign with the Division of Public Health (an educational campaign to increase awareness about the importance of a healthy lifestyle for cognitive health) and planning for our upcoming Commission meeting in Kodiak August 29th -31st.

I hope you are taking time to enjoy the bounties of summer with family and friends. Summer only comes around once a year and doesn't stay long.

Until next time,

Denise Daniello

Executive Director
Alaska Commission on Aging



Project Updates

Alaska State Plan Receives Federal Approval

The Alaska Commission on Aging received word on June 28th that the final draft of *Alaska's State Plan for Senior Services, FY 2008 – FY 2011* has been approved by Assistant Secretary on Aging Josefina Carbonell of the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA).

A preliminary draft of the state plan, which was compiled by the Alaska Commission on Aging with help from an inter-agency committee, was submitted on February 15th and made available to the public. Four public hearings were held to collect input on the plan, and comments were accepted via email and other methods. After making a number of suggested modifications, the plan was submitted to the AoA Region X office in Seattle on April 30th. Additional changes were made at the recommendation of Region X staff during the month of May.

The final version of the plan will be posted to the ACoA's website during the month of July, and a limited number of hard copies will be printed. The plan includes a needs assessment, discussion of current

(Continued on page 4)

programs and services, a set of goals, objectives, and strategies to direct progress toward meeting older Alaskans' needs, and a funding framework to guide distribution of federal Older Americans Act funds and State matching funds.

Poster Campaign Highlights Older Americans Month

Alaska Commission on Aging and Department staff created an 11" by 17" poster to celebrate Older Americans Month for May 2007, featuring this year's national theme, Making Choices for a Healthier Future. The colorful posters were mailed to senior centers and other senior providers statewide, along with copies of a proclamation signed by Governor Sarah Palin, declaring May to be Older Americans Month in Alaska.

The posters depict a timeless message about the link between healthy bodies and healthy brains, reminding seniors that "staying physically active, eating healthy, participating in group activities, and enjoying the company of friends and loved ones can enhance your overall health and well-being."

A limited number of posters are still available from the Commission.

Frank Appel Ends Double Term as Commission Chair



Appreciation: The Alaska Commission on Aging Executive Director Denise Daniello, right, presents a certificate of appreciation to outgoing Commission Chair Frank Appel at the Commission's May 2007 quarterly meeting in Fairbanks.

PHOTO BY ACoA

After serving two year-long terms as Chair of the Alaska Commission on Aging, Frank Appel will relinquish the gavel at the end of June, 2007. Appel's expert managerial skills helped guide the Commission through a period of change as the agency found itself in a new role after grant-making functions were moved to the Division of Senior & Disabilities Services.

"During my two years as chair, I was pleased with the accomplishments of the Commission," said Appel. "We transitioned from an organization primarily involved with grant administration to one that is focused on advocacy, education, and planning. We made good progress in becoming a leading advocate on senior issues. The Commission became

more skilled and effective in communicating with the legislature and administration. We also broadened our collaborations and cooperation with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, provider organizations, and our Alaskan seniors to provide a unified coalition on senior issues."

Denise Daniello, the Commission's Executive Director, presented Appel with a framed certificate of appreciation from the Commission and staff at the ACoA's quarterly meeting in Fairbanks on May 24th.

Appel's second term will end on June 30th. ACoA commissioner Banarsi Lal of Fairbanks will take the helm on July 1st as chair for Fiscal Year 2008. Sharon Howerton-Clark of Homer will continue as vice chair for a third year.

Application Process Set for the New Senior Benefits Program

The new Senior Benefits Program begins on August 1, 2007. Application forms for the new program will be available sometime in July, and will be distributed to senior centers and other groups who have contact with seniors.

The Division of Public Assistance (DPA) will mail an application form to current Senior Care recipients in July, along with a letter informing recipients they need to apply for the new Senior Benefits Program. DPA will follow up with current benefit recipients who do not return applications.

DPA will also compile a list of the names and contact information for seniors who want to apply for the new program when it begins, and will mail them applications when they are available.

Senior Care prescription drug benefit recipients (a small number of people whose incomes were slightly too high

to receive extra help from the federal government with Medicare Part D) will be notified that coverage will end and will be encouraged to apply for the Senior Benefits Program. It is expected that most prescription drug benefit recipients will qualify for the new program.

Seniors may request a Senior Benefits Program application by calling the Senior Benefits Office toll-free at 1-888-352-4150 statewide or 332-4150 in the Mat-Su area. Seniors may also apply by using the application online at www.hss.state.ak.us/dsds/pdfs/SeniorBenefitsapplication.pdf.

A comprehensive outreach effort will take place once the program is fully up and running, to ensure that those seniors who qualify are provided the opportunity to apply for the program. The Department of Health & Social Services expects about 10,700 seniors will likely qualify for the new program.

Monthly payment amounts will be determined by the gross income level of the applicant, as in the chart below. Income limits are tied to the federal

poverty guidelines for Alaska, which change every year.

Seniors Make Best Decisions Relying on Emotions and Past Experience

(Info from seniorjournal.com)

Sometimes thinking harder about unfamiliar information produces the best decisions – but older adults are less likely to fare well with this approach. So says Ellen Peters, courtesy professor of psychology at the University of Oregon and senior research scientist with Decision Research. Other times people make better choices when they rely on emotions and past experiences to guide them – and older adults may excel in these conditions.

The human brain's ability to process new information declines with age, but knowledge about the world – formed through experiences – tends to rise over time and to enhance an older person's ability to make sound decisions.

Peters is co-author of a paper in which she and colleagues examine existing literature about the aging brain and decision-making.

Understanding the effects of decision processes is

(Continued on page 6)

Senior benefits program

Qualifications and Benefits

Beginning August 01 2007

Senior household size	Annual income up to 75% of AK Federal income limit	Annual income between 75% and 100% of AK Federal income limit	Annual income between 100% and 175% of AK Federal income limit
	\$250 monthly payment	\$175 monthly payment	\$125 monthly payment
1	\$9,577	\$12,770	\$22,348
2	\$12,840	\$17,120	\$29,960

Seniors Make Best Decisions...
(Continued from page 5)

vital to improving aging people's decision-making, Peters noted. "Older people who make mistakes have less time and less physical resiliency to compensate for bad decisions than do younger people," she said.

"Having a good quality of life requires good decision-making, yet we know next-to-nothing about age differences in decision-making," Peters said.

With aging people being faced with major decisions affecting their ability to live independently, including finances and retirement, medical treatments, when to quit driving and what food to eat, understanding age differences in how information is processed in decisions has important theoretical and pragmatic implications.

The review article looked at basic information processes and mechanisms that have been studied around the world, using a dual-process approach. One process involves how people think their way through information; the other focuses on how they feel their way through it.

"Thinking capacity declines with time. We learn less easily. We process information more slowly... Dealing with numbers, for example, is an area in which older adults require more assistance,"

Peters said. In another study, Peters and another group of scientists concluded that "less is more" in the presentation of numbers portraying medical information. Simple presentations dramatically helped people understand more and make higher quality decisions.

However, from the emotional side of processing, "We may show improvements over time. We may tend to feel our way through decisions more when we are older."

"We may not be able to teach an old dog new tricks, but the old dog may have lots and lots of old tricks that help quite a bit. In some situations, the old dogs may be making better decisions than the pups."

ASA/NCOA Conference Informs, Inspires, Encourages

by Pat Branson

[**Note:** Pat Branson is the long-time executive director of Senior Citizens of Kodiak, Inc. and holds the provider seat on the Alaska Commission on Aging.]

More than 4,000 providers, caregivers and professionals in the aging network attended this year's Joint Conference of the American Society on Aging and the National

Council on Aging March 7 – 10, 2007 in Chicago. The conference theme was "Let's Re-think Aging."

This annual conference brings together aging experts from across the country. This year's conference offered over 900 sessions covering a wide spectrum of topics from health and wellness promotion to advocacy and public policy initiatives.

Workshops from A to Z

Pre-conference full- and half-day intensive sessions kicked off the conference with topics focusing on caregiving leadership, evidence-based practices, emergency disaster preparedness, mental health and aging, and preparing for the baby boomers turning 60.

After the general session opening the conference on Wednesday, March 7, with a presentation by actress and playwright Anna Deavere Smith, concurrent tracks and sessions were offered on many different subjects. These included Alzheimer's disease and related dementias; behavioral health care and mental health; business issues; civic engagement; consumer information and access to benefits; cultural and ethnic diversity; education and training; elder abuse and neglect; emerging issues; end of life issues; family and caregiving issues; health promotion and wellness; health care

(Continued on page 7)

ASA/NCOA Conference...
(Continued from page 6)

clinical issues; housing and aging in place; humanities, arts and creativity; images of aging; intergenerational programs and issues; international issues; leadership and organizational development; legal and ethical issues; marketing and communications; long-term care; men and aging; public policy and advocacy; religion and spirituality; research methods, outcomes, measurement and evaluation; rural issues; senior centers; technology; transportation and community mobility; women and aging; and workforce issues. The tracks cover just about everything and, with the workshops all being concurrent, it is difficult to choose which ones to attend.

Networking Nirvana

I had been the Executive Director at the Senior Citizens of Kodiak, Inc. (SCOK) for 7 years before I attended the first NCOA conference in 1995. Being in a group of 4,000 people who were all working in the same network was almost overwhelming to me.

Since that time, I have become involved on a national level with NCOA and its constituent unit, National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC) in serving as the Alaska representative to the NISC delegate council and as chair of its marketing committee and co-chair of the accreditation

board. SCOK became nationally accredited through NISC in 2003 and is the only senior center in Alaska that has achieved this recognition. With that kind of involvement at the national level, I now go to the conference knowing lots of people, including presenters, and find the networking outside of the workshops probably more valuable than some of the sessions.

Also at each conference is an exhibit hall where many new products and materials are displayed in a trade show atmosphere.

This year I focused on more general sessions on business, organizational theory and structure, "Going from Good to Great" with our agency, and following up on new information on senior housing options. I try to choose one track for each conference and stay with that track to get the most out of the conference.

At different times, other SCOK staff have attended the conference, and they concentrate on their program arena. This year, SCOK Family Caregiver Coordinator Marlo Moore-Smith attended the conference for the first time. At last year's conference, SCOK Adult Day Director Marita Kaplan met up with Charles Durett, a well-known architect for senior housing. From that contact, we invited Charles to our annual aging connection conference which focused on senior housing

options. (The conference is a wonderful opportunity to not only network with other professionals, but also to meet experts who might be available to participate in training or local conferences. Most love coming to Alaska.)

Hedgehog Highlight

The best presentation I heard this year was from NCOA President Jim Firman. Jim gave a workshop on "Going from Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don't," the book by Jim Collins. Dr. Firman applied this concept to NCOA, but it is applicable to any agency.

The book presents "the Hedgehog Concept" as a technique for selecting the optimal direction for organization development. This simple, crystalline concept flows from a deep understanding of the overlap of three circles, which represent: what you are best in the world at doing; what drives your resource engine; and what you are deeply passionate about. The concept can be used to create a strategy, intention, and plan to be the best at what you do.

When NCOA took this approach to their agency, they went from a 65-person Board of Directors to 13 Board members; from a staff with a mixture of skills and competencies and high turnover to a top-flight staff with low turnover; from

(Continued on page 8)

ASA/NCOA Conference... (Continued from page 7)

receiving 88% of their funding from four government contracts and 12% of their funding from private sources, to a more diversified revenue stream consisting of 70% from ten government contracts and 30% from private sources; from being \$3.8 million in debt to a positive net worth of \$1.9 million.

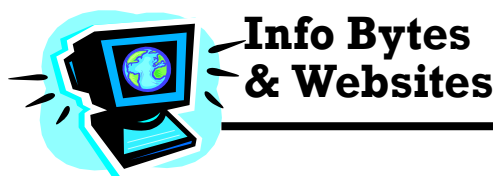
The analysis of goals, mission, and finances all relating to one another and how an agency can stay on track with its mission is one I think all agency directors and boards can use in their strategic planning and in setting goals and objectives for each year.

This information is also a reminder of how an agency can cross over to being great while continuing to meet the service demands and being creative. It also re-confirmed that many Alaskan non-profits can achieve these same goals.

That is the wonderful piece about attending this national conference: it confirms for me that in Alaska, our senior services are at the top of the chart and the way we meet service demands in this diverse state, the largest in the country, is something we can all be proud of. Though we may live in remote - not just rural - areas, we as an aging network keep up very well with the senior network trends, programs and research.

[**Note:** For information about how to find your “Hedgehog Concept,” visit author Jim Collins’ website, <http://www.jimcollins.com/lab/hedgehog/>. Collins notes that *“In his famous essay ‘The Hedgehog and the Fox,’ Isaiah Berlin divided the world into hedgehogs and foxes, based upon an ancient Greek parable: ‘The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing.’ Those who built the good-to-great companies were, to one degree or another, hedgehogs. They used their hedgehog nature to drive toward what we came to call a Hedgehog Concept for their companies. Those who led the comparison companies tended to be foxes, never gaining the clarifying advantage of a Hedgehog Concept, being instead scattered, diffused, and inconsistent.”*]

[**Note 2:** The 2008 joint conference of the National Council on Aging and the American Society on Aging is scheduled for March 27 – 30, 2008 in Washington, DC.]



Computer and Technology Help Targets Multiple Topics

If you can get to its website,

SeniorNet.org will take it from there: the online community offers friendly help and advice from volunteers in its computer and internet Q&A (question and answer) discussions, where you can also post any computer question if you find it has not already been addressed. Select the discussion group that matches your question (the groups include Assistive Technology, Computer-Generated Art, Cameras, Cell Phones and Pagers, Internet Access, Macintosh Computers, Web Logs, many types of software, and dozens of other topics). Or you can post a question to the General Computer Questions discussion if you don't find a match. Find this excellent resource at: <http://www.seniornet.org/php/default.php?PageID=5713>.

And if you have ever been frustrated when attempting to use a powerful search engine like Google or Yahoo to find specific information online, SeniorNet also offers a very useful, self-paced Learn to Search the Web course that will explain all. Just go to <http://www.seniornet.org/php/default.php?PageID=5866>.

Mapping Older America Report Published

The Brookings Institute has recently released “Mapping the Growth of Older America: Seniors and Boomers in

(Continued on page 9)

Info Bytes & Websites

(Continued from page 8)

the Early 21st Century,” by William H. Frey (June 2007). This report highlights how the aging boomers, who are moving into this decade’s fastest-growing age group, are set to expand the senior population by nearly 50 percent from 2000 to 2010. This group - more highly educated, with more professional women, and more diverse than its predecessors - will add new stresses to suburban and Sun Belt locations where they are predominantly “retiring in place” with demands for health care, transportation, and other services. For the full report, see <http://www3.brookings.edu/views/articles/200705frey.pdf>.

Caregiver Policy E-Newsletter Available

Caregiving Policy Digest, a bi-weekly e-newsletter from the National Center on Caregiving at Family Caregiver Alliance, offers a fresh look at the rapidly changing environment of family caregiving. Timely, relevant news reports keep you absolutely up-to-date on the latest developments in the field.

It includes:

- briefings on key state and federal legislation affecting family caregivers
- up-to-date news on

- innovative programs
- updates on the latest research on caregiving and best practices
- information about upcoming events and conferences

To subscribe to this free newsletter, go to:

<http://www.caregiver.org/caregiver/jsp/content/node.jsp?nodeid=836>.



Federal Notes

Senate Committee Provides Modest Increase in OAA Funding

On Thursday, June 21st, the Senate Appropriations Committee boosted spending for Older Americans Act (OAA) programs under the Administration on Aging by 4.2% or \$58.6 million, more than \$27 million higher than the level approved by a House of Representatives subcommittee earlier in June. The bill (a 2008 Labor/HHS/Education spending bill) now heads to the full Senate, where a floor vote could occur in July, with no change expected to the OAA figures.

The Senate bill includes an increase of \$38.5 million in OAA nutrition programs

(5.2%), which is \$15 million above the House number, as well as increases in several other OAA spending lines, such as those for Titles VI and VII. It also includes a total of \$28 million for the Administration on Aging’s “Choices for Independence” initiative. However, the Senate kept funding frozen for the Supportive Services and Senior Centers line (Title IIIB), whereas the House subcommittee added \$7 million.

The National Council on Aging (NCOA), in its Support Our Seniors campaign, had sought a ten percent increase for all OAA programs. Funding for these vital programs has been frozen for the last several years.

The Senate bill does not increase funding for the Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP, in Title V of the OAA), even though the second step in the mandatory federal minimum wage increase will occur during Fiscal Year 2008, requiring higher wages to tens of thousands of program participants. The House subcommittee did provide funds for the wage increase. Neither chamber provided money to cover inflation increases or program expansion for SCSEP.



(Federal Notes cont. page 10)

EPA Offers Awards to Healthy Communities for Active Aging

The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is accepting applications from municipalities, counties and tribes for an award which recognizes outstanding community planning and strategies that support active aging. Awards for “Excellence in Building Healthy Communities for Active Aging” will be presented to communities that demonstrate the best and most inclusive overall approach to implementing smart growth and active aging at the neighborhood, tribe, municipality, county, and/or regional levels.

Applicants must be public-sector entities in the United States and coordinate with their local Area Agency on Aging. Public-sector entities include all levels of elected governments, from city councils to state legislatures and their constituent parts such as planning departments and other executive branch divisions.

Application, award guidelines and entry rules on the Excellence Awards for Building Healthy Communities for Active Aging can be found at www.epa.gov/aging/bhc/awards/.



Consumer News

How to Spot Retirement Hogwash Or, What the Retirement Industry Doesn't Want You to Know

By Robert Powell (reprinted from MarketWatch with permission)

Some call it hogwash. Others call it B.S. No matter what it's called, those on the verge or already in retirement need to be on the lookout for it. Older Americans must have their “detector” up when it comes to the products and services being hawked by those in the so-called retirement industry.

According to John E. Nelson, the co-author of “What Color is Your Parachute? for Retirement: Planning Now for the Life You Want,” older Americans must be able to tell the difference between the products and services they really need and want versus those that firms – especially in the investment, insurance, real estate, travel, retail and anti-aging industries – want them to buy.

Otherwise, the retirement industry will get what it wants – more sales

– instead of Americans getting what they want.

And to that end, Nelson has created what he calls the retirement hogwash detector. It's a detector that he says can help Americans sort through the retirement lifestyle they want and need versus the one that Madison Avenue wants to sell them.

“The retirement industry wants to define your retirement for you,” said Nelson. “Instead of choosing a way to live, they want you to buy a lifestyle. Instead of reflecting on your values, they want you to value consuming the right investments, the right insurance, the right real estate, the right travel, the right retail goods and the right anti-aging products. Instead of discovering your identity, they want you to simply identify yourself as a consumer. They want images of products and services dancing in your head so that you make acquiring them the goal and the purpose of your retirement. They want consuming to be your highest purpose.”

Americans may truly want and need some of the products and services being marketed by the retirement industry. But at the moment, more Americans than not are basing their decision to purchase on emotion. And that's because retirement industry firms are increasingly using sophisticated techniques to persuade

(Continued on page 11)

Consumer News
(Continued from page 10)

Americans to buy this or that retirement “lifestyle.”

According to Nelson, these firms are selling experiences – visions of what the ideal retirement looks like – and they are using something called lifestyle marketing to separate older Americans from their money. Nelson says the retirement industry wants consumers to believe they will be in pain if they don’t buy into its definition of what retirement should be.

So what’s the best way for older Americans to get what they want instead of what the retirement industry wants them to get?

Nelson says part of the answer lies in older Americans completing his version of the “Ways to Live” exercise that was originally developed by Charles Morris at the University of Chicago in the 1940’s. That exercise, and another which can be found in the book, can help older Americans figure out their idea of the good life, as well as what they value, their identity, and their priorities. Learn more at this website: <http://www.retirementwellbeing.org/>.

But even if you don’t complete the “ways to live” exercises, it’s still possible to protect yourself against Madison Avenue, Nelson says. And that’s by taking each

and every advertisement through the retirement hogwash detector. It’s a series of questions you can use to evaluate pitches and decide whether to buy a product or service or not.

Here’s his list:

- **Pitch.** What are the facts and actual features? What are the greater implied benefits, as suggested by the pictures, music, style or tone? What emotions are these designed to trigger? In the case of advertisements by luxury auto makers, the desired emotion is to make the customer want more social status.
- **Underwriter.** Who’s behind the pitch? What’s the marketer’s motive? Does the marketer want an ongoing relationship or just a one-time transaction? Does the marketer really have any interest in your well-being? Those marketing romantic getaway cruises likely don’t care about their patrons.
- **Assumptions.** What are the underlying messages about you or the world? What are the hidden values or beliefs? In your experience, are these really true for you in your own life? With cosmetic surgeons, for instance, the hidden belief is that old is less desirable and valuable and young is more

desirable and valuable.

- **Ideal Outcome.** What’s the most you can realistically expect? Could you actually get the implied benefits? What can this do for you and what can’t it do for you? In the case of advertisements by the plus- 50 residential real estate industry, the implied benefit is that your neighbors will be the beautiful people. The reality is that your neighbors will be real people, not professional models.
- **Needs.** Why might you really need it? Why might you not need it? What are the alternatives? Finally, what higher need can you identify that the pitch hints at, but could never fulfill? How might you really fill this need? Consumers who are being sold investments, for instance, need to learn more about the investment or get advice from a trustworthy source.

For Nelson, the need to detect hogwash is among the keys to a fulfilling retirement. In fact, it could represent the difference between having a life of “voluntary simplicity” versus a life of “involuntary poverty.”

Robert Powell has been a journalist covering personal finance issues for more than 20 years, writing and editing for publications such as The Wall Street Journal, the Financial Times, and Mutual Fund Market News.

(Continued on page 12)

Consumer News
(Continued from page 11)

Visit the MarketWatch website at
<http://www.marketwatch.com>.



**Health
News**

Chronic Disease Self-Management Workshops Available in Alaska

Living Well Alaska is a series of workshops that help people with chronic illnesses learn ways to self-manage their condition and take charge of their life. *Living Well Alaska* workshops are being held throughout Alaska for people with all kinds of chronic illnesses, such as arthritis, diabetes, and heart disease. *Living Well Alaska* covers a range of health topics, such as:

- healthy eating
- relaxation techniques
- managing fatigue
- low-impact exercising
- managing medications
- problem-solving
- goal-setting
- working with your health care professional

Research on this program has shown that participants are able to manage their

symptoms better and communicate more easily with their doctors and loved ones. People who take the program feel better, are less limited by their illness, and may spend less time at the doctor or in the hospital.

The State of Alaska, Section of Chronic Disease and Health Promotion, has obtained from Stanford University a state license to provide these workshops in Alaska that is valid through August 2009. Courses have been offered in Juneau, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Talkeetna, and other locations. For information about upcoming *Living Well Alaska* classes in your area, or if you would like to become a course leader for your organization or community, please contact Diane Peck, Arthritis Program Manager, at (907) 269-8447 or Barbara Stillwater, Diabetes Program manager, at (907) 269-8035.

Elderly Sleep Woes Linked to Increased Suicide Risk

from HealthDay News, and
www.EverydayHealth.com

Chronically troubled sleep may be a marker for an increased risk for suicide in the elderly, a new report suggests.

“The association exists even after you control for

depression,” said lead researcher Rebecca Bernert, a clinical psychology doctoral student at Florida State University. “This finding is important, because sleep disturbances are amenable to treatment, unlike other risk factors, such as past suicide attempts. Sleep problems can be undone,” she said.

In the study, Bernert reviewed health data on almost 14,500 elderly people aged 67 to 90 years old, tracked over a 10-year period.

During this period, 21 individuals committed suicide. When each suicide was matched to 20 randomly selected controls, the researchers found that sleep disturbances, independent of depression, predicted an increased risk for eventual death by suicide.

“The relationship between sleep problems and mortality is a complex one,” said Gregg Jacobs, an insomnia specialist with the University of Massachusetts Memorial Medical Center in Worcester. “Stress, for instance, is co-founded with insomnia, and it is really the stress causing the increased risk... not just not sleeping well,” Jacobs noted.

Studies also show that regular use of sleeping pills – strongly linked to insomnia, of course – also increases the risk for suicide. Those having trouble sleeping also sometimes use alcohol and

(Continued on page 13)

drugs to self-medicate, and these abuses can raise the risk of mortality, Jacobs said.

How might sleep problems impact suicide risk?

“It’s pure speculation, but sleep may play an important role in regulating moods,” Bernert said. Having insufficient sleep can adversely affect someone’s mood, she said.

Insomnia, the most common sleep complaint, affects approximately 48 percent of older adults, according to the National Sleep Foundation.

Older adults should get seven or eight hours of sleep a night, Bernert said, but many report that they have trouble falling asleep and so get less than they need. Some problems associated with sleeplessness include memory and attention problems, depressed moods, excessive daytime drowsiness, more nighttime falls, and reliance on over-the-counter or prescription sleep aids.

If an older person is having sleep problems, they shouldn’t assume it’s just an inevitable part of aging, Bernert added.

“It’s important for each individual to see a sleep specialist,” she said, because treatment is available and effective.

Vitamin B9 May Protect Against Alzheimer’s

A high intake of folate (vitamin B9) from dietary and supplement sources may decrease the risk of Alzheimer’s disease, according to a new study published in the *Archives of Neurology* (2007, vol. 64, no. 1).

Researchers at Columbia University administered a food frequency questionnaire to 965 subjects (age 65 and older) who had no signs of dementia. After six years, they found that those with the highest total folate intake had the lowest risk of contracting Alzheimer’s.

Folate helps lower levels of homocysteine, an amino acid in the blood. Studies have linked elevated homocysteine levels to an increased risk for Alzheimer’s, stroke, and heart disease.

Scientists noted that a decreased risk for Alzheimer’s was not associated solely with dietary folate or folate from supplements; the benefit was seen only when the two sources were combined. “The richest sources of dietary folate are deep green leafy vegetables, asparagus, broccoli, whole wheat, and brewer’s yeast,” says Shari Lieberman, Ph.D., CNS, FACN, author of *The Real Vitamin and Mineral Book* (Avery, 2007).

Walkable Neighborhoods Key to Senior Activity Levels

The benefits of walking and being active are well known, especially for older people, but what kind of neighborhood gets seniors going?

It’s not necessarily one with lots of walking trails or parks. What matters, researchers found, are the destinations like restaurants, grocery stores, and even bars that are within a half-mile of your home.

“The strongest relationship was with daily places we go for eating and socializing,” said Anne Vernez Moudon, professor of urban design and planning at the University of Washington. She and other researchers did a three-year study of people 65 and older to find out who regularly walked and why, and what types of communities they occupied.

Parks and walking trails – Seattle trademarks – had little to do with how much senior citizens walked, Moudon said. And surprisingly, Seattle’s hilly geography also was not a significant factor.

Walkability seemed to depend on the distance to stores, length of blocks, and perceived safety. Moudon said people who use public transportation are also more likely to walk, so proximity to bus stops was important

(Continued on page 14)

in this Seattle study.

Anne Ludlum, who took part in the study, said walking keeps her alert, curious, and stimulated. “I want to go and see what the sign in front of Bailey Coy (Books) is today.”

She has lived with her husband in a townhouse in Seattle’s dense, pedestrian-friendly Capitol Hill area for more than 10 years. The 75-year-old writer and actress has lived in urban centers most of her life. Some of her friends live in suburban areas and find it hard to exercise except at a gym.

The study tracked 936 members of the Seattle-based health plan Group Health Cooperative, who ranged in age from 65 to 97. Data about their walking habits was combined with geographic information from urban planning researchers.

“If you’re able to walk to a destination you would normally drive to, then you’re going to get physical activity in your everyday life,” said Dr. Ethan Berke, lead researcher previously with the University of Washington and now at Dartmouth University.

The study was published in the March issue of the American Journal of Public Health.

The study did not show if a more walkable neighborhood

leads to better health or if healthier people tend to live in places where they can walk.

But Berke and his colleagues suspect that exercise is one prescription against Alzheimer’s disease, dementia, obesity, heart diseases, depression, cancer, and other ailments. Walking’s connection to mental health is the subject of Berke’s current research. *[See following story.]*

Ludlum agrees with the theory: “I’ve always found that living someplace where I could walk to everywhere I needed to go made me much happier and undoubtedly healthier.”

Neighborhoods May Impact Male Depression

Living in a pedestrian-friendly environment may help shield older men from depression, a new study suggests.

Researchers found that among 740 older adults living in the Seattle area, men who lived in more walkable neighborhoods tended to show fewer depression symptoms than men from less walker-friendly areas.

The findings, published in the Journal of American Geriatrics Society, are in line with research suggesting that moderate exercise can help battle depression. However, the link between

neighborhood “walkability” and lower depression risk was not fully explained by higher exercise levels.

“That tells us that there’s something else about the neighborhood itself,” said lead study author Dr. Ethan M. Berke, of the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire.

One possibility is that these neighborhoods allow older adults to feel more connected to their communities and less socially isolated, Berke told Reuters Health.

Walkable neighborhoods have sidewalks, streets with safe intersections, and stores, restaurants, and other destinations within a short distance. In their study, Berke and his colleagues found that men who lived in such areas had lower scores on a standard measure of depression – even with other factors, like overall health, income, and exercise habits, taken into account.

The same was not true of women, but the reason for this was not clear.

Men are less likely than women to seek care for depression symptoms, which may leave them more vulnerable to environmental factors that worsen depression. Women may also have other forms of social support that buffer them from the effects of living in a less-

(Continued on page 15)

walkable neighborhood.

The study findings do not prove that a person's neighborhood changes his depression risk, Berke pointed out. But if pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods do offer depression protection, that would be important for older adults who are deciding where to live after they retire, he said. It could also mean that more senior centers and assisted living facilities should be built in walkable neighborhoods.

"Hopefully," Berke said, "we'll start looking at neighborhood design as a public health issue."

ACoA's 2007 Advocacy Efforts Bring a Measure of Success

Aside from its work on behalf of senior benefits, the Alaska Commission on Aging, the Alaska Aging Advocacy Network (a group of about 150 seniors and advocates who receive ongoing updates from the Commission during the legislative session), and other senior advocates can point to several legislative

successes this year:

One of the Commission's top legislative priorities for 2007 was an increase of \$125,000 in GF/MH (General Funds/Mental Health) for the Flexible Long-Term Care Supports program which helps provide in-home services for those with Alzheimer's disease or related dementias. (People with a primary diagnosis of ADRD are not eligible for care under the Medicaid waiver.) This amount was successfully added to the FY 08 budget. The amount, which will now become part of the program's budget base, replaces funds previously contributed by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority.

The Commission supported HB 18, a bill designed to help address Alaska's physician shortage by increasing the number of WWAMI student slots from 10 to 20 per year. The bill passed. (WWAMI is a program providing for medical education at the University of Washington School of Medicine for students from Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho – states which do not have medical schools.)

For several years, the Commission has supported a bill to create a civil legal services fund to be used for legal representation of low-income individuals. This year, Senate Bill 69, a measure to create such a fund, passed the legislature.

While no action was taken

this year on the ACoA's top-priority "Keep the Elders Home Initiative," a campaign to increase both operating and capital funds for grant programs which provide essential home- and community-based services for Alaska's growing number of seniors, the Commission believes that it has successfully begun an education and dialogue process with legislators on these issues; the legislature's capital budget did include over \$7 million in projects for senior centers and other senior programs around the state. These funds are subject to the Governor's approval. The Commission had submitted letters of support on behalf of a number of these projects.

In other advocacy efforts this year:

The Commission provided a letter of support for the successful Senate Joint Resolution 3, which urges Congress to increase the Medicare reimbursement rates for Alaska. The Commission also sent letters directly to Senator Ted Stevens, Senator Lisa Murkowski, and Rep. Don Young, detailing the need for a boost in reimbursement rates in order to assure that primary care is available to all seniors in Alaska. Sen. Murkowski held a Congressional hearing on this issue in Anchorage in February 2007, at which Commission chair Frank Appel testified.

(Continued on page 16)

ACoA Advocacy Efforts...
(Continued from page 15)

In conjunction with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the Commission supported extension of the Alaska Homeless Council and the development of a housing trust to help address homelessness among Trust beneficiaries and other Alaskans. Governor Sarah Palin extended and expanded the Alaska Homeless Council, and charged it with developing an affordable housing trust and curbing homelessness.

The Commission provided letters of support for federal funds and additional grant funds for the University of Alaska's Geriatric Education Center. Federal funds for GECs, which had been eliminated in December 2005, were reinstated.

The contributions of Jeannette Lacey, the Commission's MSW student intern during the 2006-2007 school year, were key to this year's advocacy efforts. Jeannette researched legislation, maintained regular contact with the Alaska Aging Advocacy Network, and provided information to participants of the Commission's bi-weekly senior teleconferences during the legislative session.



(From Shut-Out to Victory...
Continued from page 1)

Advocacy Network, and other groups of senior advocates vigorously advocated for an expanded senior benefits program throughout the 2007 legislative session. Many legislators had indicated their support for some form of the program. So when the legislature adjourned on May 17th without addressing an extension or replacement for the expiring Senior Care program, howls of shock and anger erupted from seniors, their families, caregivers, and senior advocates. Many saw it as a betrayal of the state's most vulnerable residents, comparing it to the abrupt termination of the Longevity Bonus program by former governor Murkowski in 2003. (Senior Care was created at that time to help meet the financial needs of the state's lowest-income seniors.)

Soon after the session's adjournment, legislators and Governor Palin (who had supported senior benefit programs during her 2006 campaign) began hearing from scores of outraged citizens. The Governor swiftly authorized cash payments to continue for at least one month after the end of the Senior Care program. Soon a special session of the legislature was called for June 26th, and a House Finance Committee hearing scheduled for June 6th to take testimony from seniors and others around the state on the topic of the senior benefits

program. AARP organized a rally in midtown Anchorage in support of keeping a senior benefits program. The rally on June 14th drew about 100 participants.

Hearing from the Grass Roots

Those legislators who attended the June 6th House Finance Committee hearing received an up-close and personal glimpse of reality from 38 impassioned individuals from across the state, all of whom spoke in favor of Senior Care or a comparable benefits program for needy seniors. If any legislators had been entertaining the belief that the program was a "freebie" for people who are already comfortable or who get plenty of help from other forms of public assistance, they were quickly disabused of such notions.

And if any of those who testified doubted that legislators were listening, it should be noted that their



AARP PHOTO

AARP Rally: Angelina Luna participates in a midtown Anchorage rally for SeniorCare sponsored by AARP on June 14th. The rally drew approx. 100 participants, and elicited honks of support from many passing motorists.

(Continued on page 17)

(Continued from page 16)

repeated requests that a senior benefits program be made permanent, with no automatic sunset date, did indeed become a feature of the final bill as passed – even though all earlier versions of that bill and the others had contained a sunset date.

Some selections from the many excellent comments offered at the June 6th hearing:

- The director of the Mabel T. Caverly Senior Center in Anchorage stated that 90 percent of their clients receive Senior Care and pointed out that \$120 per month can make the difference between eating and not eating. She noted that seniors are having a tough time hanging on, and that sometimes there is no food in the fridge at the end of the month.
- Rachelle Davis, a concerned citizen and nurse, said she cares for a lot of seniors who are worried about the loss of the Senior Care program; it's a small amount of money, she said, but they need it for food and fuel. "It's hard to manage chronic diseases when someone doesn't have food... Low-income seniors are a vulnerable population who need our help."
- Alvin Martin, with the FNA Elders Program, testified that he sees a lot of people struggling day by day to survive. The stress and

uncertainty affect their health. Many had no education and did not have good-paying jobs during their employment life – they really need this extra help from the government. "I never thought I'd see the day we'd have to ask for favors from our own state, the richest in the union. Many of these elders fought for our country. They deserve our help."



AARP PHOTO

Advocating Senior Power:

Seniors and advocates wait as the Legislature convenes for a special session on the continuance of SeniorCare.

- Another gentleman from Fairbanks, age 74, testified that he has a monthly income of just \$470 per month, including the \$120 from Senior Care. He attends the Native Elders Program for meals. "I tried to go

back to work, but they want younger, more able people."

- Kathleen Dupavich of the Fairbanks North Star Council on Aging noted that their agency provides information and referral services, Meals on Wheels, rides, and other services for seniors. She said Senior Care fills a gap that no other program does, and that she'd like to see a higher income cut-off level for the benefit program, as fuel costs and other costs are going up. "We need to think about the importance of the contributions of this generation to this country," Kathleen stated. "They gave us the foundation for our future. Investing in seniors is as important as investing in kids." Kathleen also recommended there be no assets test for the program. "These are Depression-era children, and they should not be forced to spend their last dollar of life savings."
- Susan Faith of the Salvation Army's Older Alaskans Program stated that her program provides meals to over 500 seniors each week. Many are homebound. All live on the edge financially. With the cost of utilities going up, the loss of Senior Care would be a disaster, she said. "The money is NOT going for frills."
- Alison Lehman of the Palmer Senior Center said that the loss of Senior Care would mean a greater than ten

(Continued on page 18)

(Continued from page 17)

percent decrease in the incomes of many seniors. Some would be prematurely forced into using senior center services such as meals and rides when they could have remained independent longer.

- Doris Carpenter of Wasilla said she felt totally devastated when nobody got back to her on her Public Opinion Messages supporting Senior Care. She testified that she would not be able to eat without Senior Care, and also suggested the Legislature consider reinstating the renters' rebate program for seniors who rent.
- Elaine Pitka of the Fairbanks Native Association Elders Program noted that the cost of living is getting tighter for seniors, and people get very nervous when Senior Care is threatened. "People depend on it," said Elaine. "Seniors are on fixed incomes and every bit helps. Alaska's living costs are so high – rent, utilities, and vehicle costs." Elaine reported that 60% of the elders in their program are nutritionally compromised.
- Don Briggs, a member of the Alaska Retired Educators Association and AARP, said he would not benefit from the program but that the cost of everything is increasing – food, medications, fuel. An 85-year-old can't cut

wood anymore, especially if their kids live in another community. "A good, just society is measured by its treatment of the most vulnerable citizens, the elderly. The money spent here is tiny compared to the capital budget the Legislature passed."

- Lou Gross of the North Star Council on Aging stated that some type of assistance for low-income seniors is needed. He was very disappointed when the Legislature adjourned with no action taken to continue Senior Care. Lou shared his belief that there are many seniors who are eligible for Senior Care but too devastated after the loss of the Longevity Bonus to even apply. "Consider the cost of NOT making this investment – you will end up paying on the back end for preventable medical problems if you don't pay for the basics on the front end." Lou also noted that Senior Care recipients may not be the best self-advocates, as they don't have the assets most seniors do.
- Jamie Fisher of Soldotna observed that this was the most poignant testimony he'd ever heard at a public hearing, and said the State should provide some financial assistance to its neediest seniors. "The food assistance now available often does not last the entire month. Recently some members of Congress

went on a Food Stamps regimen and found that they rapidly lost weight."

- A gentleman from Homer testified that he and his wife live on \$1600 a month, from which they make an \$800 house payment. They had to drop their health insurance – they couldn't afford it. At age 82, he can no longer work. He said he has trouble understanding why the State can't help seniors survive rather than spending all sorts of money for parks and trails.
- Jane Simmons of Homer said she lives in an assisted living facility. She gets Social Security of \$500 per month plus coverage from Medicaid and Medicare. If she loses the \$120 per month, she said she won't be able to pay her rent.
- Pam Horsdovsky, owner of Elder Options of Alaska, serves seniors with long-term care needs. She said she speaks for 17 seniors with disabilities who are living from month to month on Social Security, public assistance, and Senior Care. They have no assets to draw upon. Fuel costs are rising. Recently Pam noticed the cost of prune juice had doubled. The people Pam works with spend all their income every month. One lady, age 91, gets only Social Security, but still tries to help her disabled daughter with it. "Please

(Continued on page 19)

(Continued from page 18)

continue this much-needed program,” requested Pam.

- Sharon Howerton-Clark of Homer, a member of the Alaska Commission on Aging, said that it is deplorable how the Legislature is treating seniors. “Seniors are not welfare people – we bring in over a billion dollars a year to the state’s economy. Low-income seniors should be treated with respect. Many had huge medical bills prior to their spouses’ deaths, and now they’re too old to go back to work. Do the right thing!”
 - Anna Winters, a senior center manager from Sitka, said she represents seniors who have lived their whole lives in Alaska. “They built this state – consider that.” Anna said 50% of her clients can’t afford a \$4 donation for lunch or \$1.50 for a ride, though they try hard to pay their way. Senior Care payments are used for groceries, utilities, medication, and medical bills. Sometimes people have to choose among these needs. Senior Care helps meet their daily basic needs for survival. “Seniors should be able to stay independent as long as possible. It’s essential for them to be able to stay in their homes. Consider making Senior Care a permanent program.”
 - Betty Keegan, a senior housing manager from Wrangell and member of the Alaska Commission on Aging, explained that “Seniors are a bargain for Alaska. Seniors don’t use schools, and aren’t adding to the population. They are law-abiding citizens, so they don’t create the need for more police. They’re not driving to work, so we don’t need more roads on account of seniors. Seniors are very consistent about voting. Elders value life and display family values to those generations that may lack them. Many act as foster grandparents for kids who lack the positive influence of older people. Seniors have more time on their hands, so they volunteer for many valuable organizations. Alaska has the second-fastest-growing senior population – so we’re not going away. In fact, Alaska is getting state-of-the-art health care all over the state because of the presence of seniors! The Longevity Bonus ended abruptly, but please continue with a senior benefit that does not have a sunset date. Alaska seniors receive greater benefits than some others, but they have greater costs as well. Think of your moms and dads – wouldn’t you want the best for them?”
 - Marie Darlin of AARP in Juneau testified that Senior Care beneficiaries use their stipend for food, rent, utilities, and medicine.
- She said she appreciated the special session called to deal with Senior Care. “Many older Alaskans live on the edge. Those who are renters have an especially difficult time.”
- Sam Trivette with the Retired Public Employees of Alaska in Juneau urged legislators to support the more generous features of House Bill 198. He said the current Senior Care program has too many technical problems, and the benefits under Senate Bill 4 are too low. Sam mentioned that seniors have a net positive impact of \$1.46 billion on the Alaskan economy each year, supporting 110,000 jobs in the state.
 - Denise Daniello, executive director of the Alaska Commission on Aging, testified that the Commission would like to see the program include the higher income and benefit levels featured in House Bill 198. Denise also noted an analysis performed by the Commission that indicated a higher proportion of elders enrolled in Senior Care in rural communities where poverty and the cost of living are highest.
 - Lorilyn Swanson, manager of Fireweed Place Senior Apartments in Juneau and chair of the Juneau Commission on Aging, said she deals with the reduction in senior income

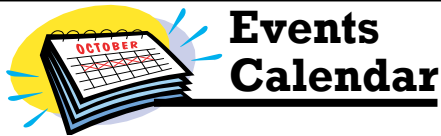
(Continued on page 20)

(Continued from page 19)

on a daily basis. Twenty of the 75 seniors she works with receive Senior Care. "To have \$120 taken away means having to change housing or do without necessities. They didn't plan this. Many had a sick spouse for years." Seven people in her complex got bumped off Senior Care due

to a small increase in their Social Security benefits, because the Senior Care income levels were frozen several years ago. "The Legislature only succeeded in raising seniors' anxiety just as with the Longevity Bonus shock from the previous administration. Please permanently fund Senior Care!"

- Lorraine McGee from Wrangell, age 84, testified that she has lived in Alaska since 1944, and still works quite a bit. She cannot believe they have discontinued Senior Care. "Seniors have no idea what they'll do. I sold my car when the Longevity Bonus ended. Seniors need help – and we vote!"



Events Calendar

August 29-31, 2007:

The Alaska Commission on Aging holds its annual rural outreach meeting in Kodiak this year, with site visits to senior programs in Kodiak, Port Lions, and Ouzinkie on August 29th, and a Commission meeting at Senior Citizens of

Kodiak, Inc. at 302 Erskine Avenue on August 30th and 31st. Check the Commission's website at www.alaskaaging.org near the meeting date for a complete agenda.

September 21-22, 2007:

The 15th Annual Care of the Elderly Conference sponsored by UAS–Sitka will be held on the Sitka campus. The goal of the Care of the Elderly Conference is to assure

optimal quality of life for elders through care and treatment that encompasses the mind, body, and spirit, and to understand health care problems common to the elderly and strategies to provide health care solutions for the whole person. Continuing education credit is available. Contact Marilyn Durocher at 907-747-7728 for more info or email at marilyn.durocher@uas.alaska.edu.

Presorted Std.
 US Postage
PAID
 Juneau, AK
 Permit No. 98

Alaskan Seniors: Living Longer, Growing Stronger
 Alaska Commission on Aging
 P.O. Box 110693
 Juneau, AK 99811-0693