



COMING OF AGE

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Thoughts to Ponder

“If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant: if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.”

-Anne Bradstreet

“In the Spring, I have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours.”

-Mark Twain

OSHL Elections

It only takes two hours a month to make a difference! The Oklahoma Silver Haired Legislature is comprised of peer elected representatives with the goal of educating seniors in the legislative process and highlighting senior issues and solutions to the Oklahoma Legislature. If you see the needs of seniors not being met, but are unsure of how to promote and advocate for change, OSHL can be your answer.



Oklahoma Silver Haired Legislature is now accepting applications for candidacy in Tulsa, Creek and Osage counties. To become a candidate for office, the individual shall obtain a petition with signatures of (25) seniors. The completed petition, plus \$12.50 filing fee, must be received by the Tulsa Area Agency on Aging by 4:00p.m. March 19, 2008.

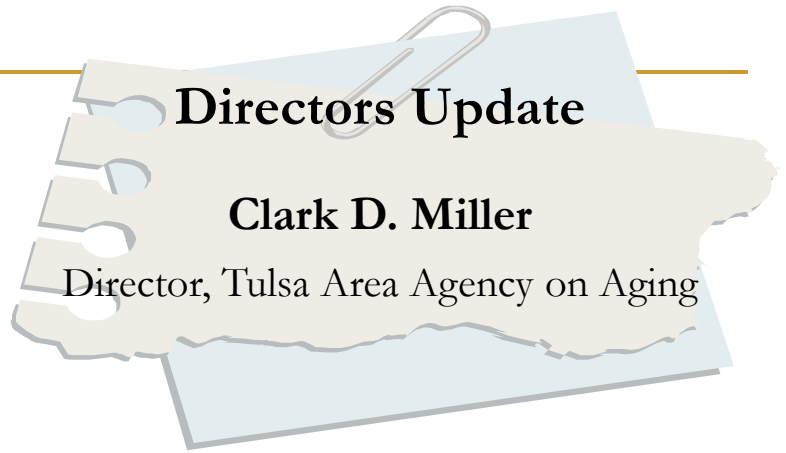
To be eligible for election, the candidate must be:

- At least 60 years of age
- A resident of Oklahoma
- A registered voter in the State of Oklahoma, and
- Willing to commit to serve through the session as well as in post-session duties for a three-year term.



There are a total of two Senate positions, eight Representative positions, and ten alternate positions available. The statewide election will be held on Friday, March 28, 2008. For more information, please contact Allecia Ratliff at (918)596-7687.

This Coming of Age newsletter has several volunteer opportunities and includes a special focus on our wonderful volunteers, including our “Super-Volunteer,” Eva Pope-Garrett, star of print, television, and internet media



Directors Update

Clark D. Miller

Director, Tulsa Area Agency on Aging

First, I want to comment on the volunteer opportunities. One of the organizations TAAA supports is the Oklahoma Silver Haired Legislature (SHL). Annually, SHL meets in the State Capitol legislative chambers in Oklahoma City and identifies five priority bills to rally behind during the upcoming legislative session. It is an opportunity to influence actual legislation and have a say in the bills that impact senior citizens in Oklahoma. In the past, a number of these positions were left unfilled, and as a result Tulsa has been under-represented in SHL. There are ten positions available plus ten alternate positions, so I encourage anyone interested in state government to throw your hat in the ring!

The second volunteer opportunity is to attend Senior Day at the Capitol on April 14. The inside of the State Capitol building is breathtaking. If you have never seen it, this is a wonderful opportunity spend a day in an inspiring setting. The program will be excellent, and you will have the chance to personally visit and advocate for legislation with your Senator and Representative. We are limited to two buses, so sign up today!

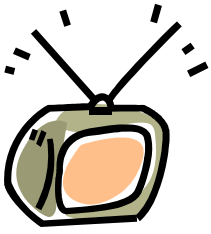
I also want to personally thank all the wonderful volunteers who serve on the Tri-County Council on Aging, Ombudsman volunteers, and those who volunteer daily at our nutrition centers. You are the best, and your service to others is appreciated by me, and even more by the people you positively impact on a daily basis. Thank you for everything you do!



The Tulsa Area Agency on Aging will be hosting the Tri County Senior Spelling Bee Thursday, April 10th, from 1 to 3 pm at Central Center in Centennial Park.

Winners of the Tri-County Area Spelling Bee will win an overnight trip to Oklahoma City to participate in the State Spelling Bee on Wednesday, May 21st. If you would like to join in this fun yet challenging event, contact the Tulsa Area Agency on Aging at 596-7688 by March 14th for an enrollment packet.

Digital Television Transition: February 17, 2009



What Is The DTV Transition?

Currently, many over-the-air stations are broadcasting in both analog and digital TV DTV formats. After February 17, 2009, full-power TV stations will only broadcast in digital. The DTV transition will affect those who watch free, over-the-air televisions (through a rooftop antenna or “rabbit ears”). If you watch over-the-air programs on an analog TV, you must take action before February 17, 2009.

Why Are We Switching?

Federal law requires the switch, which will give needed communication channels to police, fire and emergency rescue personnel. It will also allow for new wireless services for consumers. In addition, since digital is more efficient than analog, it allows stations to broadcast several programs at the same time, instead of just one program with analog. This means broadcasters can offer consumers more choices. Digital also allows broadcasters to offer improved picture and sound quality, including high definition (HDTV) programming.

What Should I Do To Be Ready?

You have three choices:

- 1) **Connect your analog TV to a digital-to-analog converter box.** Digital-to-analog converter boxes will be in stores in 2008 and will have a one-time cost of \$40-\$70. To help consumers pay for the boxes, the U.S. Government will be offering two \$40 coupons per household. You will be able to request the coupons beginning in January of 2008. For more information on the coupons, visit www.dtv2009.gov or call 1-888-388-2009 (voice) or 1-877-530-2634 (TTY). Your current broadcast antenna should work for digital broadcasts.
- 2) **Buy a digital television (a TV with a built-in digital tuner).** Remember that you do not need to buy a High Definition TV (HDTV) to enjoy broadcast television. Plus, your current broadcast antenna should work for digital broadcasts.
- 3) **Subscribe to a paid TV service.** If you subscribe to a paid services such as cable or satellite TV, you should contact your provider to see what, if any, equipment you may need. Remember that you will need a digital-to-analog converter box for any analog TV in your home not connected to your paid TV service.



Have questions or need more information?
Call Tulsa Area Agency on Aging at
918-596-7688 or SENIOR INFO-LINE AT 1-800-211-2116

\$\$ Tax Rebate Information \$\$

Many seniors are not aware that they need to file this year in order to receive the tax rebate. Even if you did not make enough money to owe taxes in 2007, you can still be eligible to receive the rebate, but you must file a tax return.

If you normally file a return, file as usual, by April 15. Rebate checks will begin to go out in May 2008. If you don't normally file a return, you will need to file a 1040A or a 1040 form to get your check. List the amount of your 2007 (Social Security or disability) benefits on line 20a of Form 1040 or line 14a of Form 1040A.

If you already filed a 1040, but did not report some benefits, you can file a 1040X to amend your return, which will not increase your tax liability at all, and may make you eligible for the rebate.

If you choose to receive your rebate by direct deposit, it will arrive quicker. If you earned less than \$3,000, you do not qualify for the tax rebate. If you earned more than \$3,000, but paid no taxes, you will receive \$300 (if married, the couple receives \$600). Finally, if you earned more than \$3,000 and paid taxes, you will receive \$600 (if married, the couple receives \$1,200). For those filing joint tax returns, only a total of \$3,000 qualifying income from both spouses is required to be eligible for a payment.

For tax preparation assistance or Tax-Aide counseling, there are several local resources that can provide free assistance. AARP offers the Tax-Aide counseling program. You can call to make an appointment at (918) 250-7184. Also, Community Action Project provides free tax preparation at (918) 382-3333. Northeastern State University in Broken Arrow is also providing tax assistance at (918) 486-2471. Finally, if you need additional information, you can visit the IRS website 24 hours a day at www.irs.gov.

Senior Tax Rebate Forms

Within the Vision 2025 infrastructure package passed by voters September 9, 2003, a rebate was included for senior citizens. Structured to return what they may have paid into the Vision 2025 fund during the course of the year, applications for the refund are available in several places. You can go to the Tulsa County Treasurer's web site at www.treasurer.tulsacounty.org, all public library branches, and by mail or in person from the County Treasurer's office at 500 S. Denver Ave., Room 323, Tulsa, OK 74103-3840.

This annual rebate has no income requirement. One rebate per household is allowed. Applicants must be ages 65 or older and have lived in Tulsa County for the entire 2007 calendar year. The rebate period closes March 31.

Those who qualify may expect to receive a check in the mail within approximately two to three weeks.

Senior Day At The Capitol - April 14th, 2008

Once again, Tulsa Area Agency on Aging has arranged for buses to transport seniors from Creek, Osage and Tulsa Counties to our State Capitol in Oklahoma City for "Senior Day at the Capitol." This is your opportunity to meet your legislators and make your voices heard on issues affecting seniors.

This year's theme is "One Message, One Voice - Ensuring Meaningful Choices For Seniors."

To reserve your place, fill out the form below and return it along with a \$10.00 check or money order, to cover the cost of transportation and lunch, made out to TCCA and mail to Tulsa Area Agency on Aging, P.O. Box 50584, Tulsa, OK 74150. **The deadline is April 4th.** Registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis.

CREEK COUNTY: Depart Bristow, Wal-Mart parking lot 6:30 AM return at 3:00 pm

TULSA COUNTY: Depart Tulsa, Sears parking lot, 17th & Yale 6:00 am, return at 3:30 pm

April 14, 2008

SENIOR DAY AT THE CAPITOL REGISTRATION

Name: _____ Age _____
(Print)

Address: _____ Phone _____
(Print)

City _____ Zip Code _____

Departing from (Circle one) Creek County Tulsa County

I understand that Senior Day at the Capitol is a statewide advocacy event for all senior citizens in Oklahoma. I also understand Tulsa Area Agency on Aging and Tri-County Council on Aging provide group transportation to assist senior citizens age 60 and over in order to attend this event. I release Tulsa Area Agency on Aging and Tri-County Council on Aging of all liability either direct or implied.

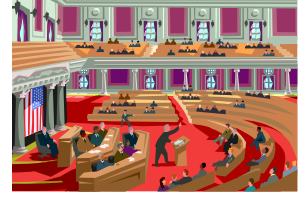
Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Signature)

Note: Each person ⁵ MUST sign an individual registration form.

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

As this newsletter goes to print, the Oklahoma legislative session is going strong. It would be impossible to provide you an accurate picture of the current status of any bill. The best source of timely, accurate information is from the Oklahoma legislative web page at

www.lsb.state.ok.us. TAAA can also forward you pending legislation updates we receive from Shirley Cox, Legal Service Developer for the Aging Services Division. If you want to be added to our e-mail list, contact taaa@cityoftulsa.org.



Now is the time to advocate for bills and issues that impact senior citizens. You can call the Oklahoma State Senate toll-free at 1-800-865-6490 and the Oklahoma State House toll-free at 1-800-522-8502. Ask for your Senator or Representative, then refer to the number of the bill, and state the reasons that you are for or against the bill. It is painless, and your voice can, and will make a difference

Underused Adult Immunizations

Submitted by Sallie Henderson



Whooping Cough

Many people do not realize that adults can and do come down with whooping cough. Many think it was eliminated decades ago. However, cases of whooping cough have been on the increase since 1976 and more than half the cases are diagnosed in adults, says the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Many physicians are not thinking about whooping cough in adults and therefore it is often misdiagnosed. Cases in adults look different than those in babies and children. There is a hacking cough that can go on for a month or six weeks and that can interfere with sleep, resulting in broken ribs, or causing pneumonia.

Children are not immune until they have received several shots, leaving babies one year old and younger at risk for developing whooping cough. Because of the numbers of cases in adults, since 2007 a vaccine has been available for use by adults through age 64 and adolescents. It has been combined with vaccines against diphtheria and tetanus and is called Dtap. It should be given every 10 years. The bad news is that very few adults are receiving the immunization. The vaccine is not recommended for adults 65 and older. It has not been tested for effectiveness and safety in that age group. Whooping cough rates are low in that age group.

Shingles

CDC also wants more older adults 60 and older, to get the new vaccination against shingles. A shingles outbreak results in a painful rash with blisters that can take two to four weeks to get better. The pain itself can be severe and last from 30 days to months or years. It is caused by a past case of chicken pox that becomes active in the nerve cells in later life. It can occur in more than 40% of people older than 60. Studies show that the vaccine can prevent shingles about half the time.

Ombudsman Volunteer

Eva Pope-Garrett

Eva Pope-Garrett, Tulsa Area Agency on Aging Long-Term Care Ombudsman volunteer, was recently profiled by Carole Lambert on News Channel 8 for her activities as a volunteer in the Ombudsman program. Eva has been an active and dedicated volunteer with the Ombudsman Program for over four years.



As a volunteer, Eva visits St. Simeon's Health Center two hours each week, talking and interacting with the residents, responding to complaints, and advocating for the rights of persons in the facility. Carol Lambert said that "Eva is a great ambassador and encourages others to get involved." "I feel I am needed. I feel I am doing something and making a difference" says Eva.

Eva is an active volunteer in many organizations and joined our ombudsman volunteer group through RSVP. Eva joined in the ombudsman training session for new volunteers and encouraged them to join our great program after they complete the training.

April is volunteer appreciation month. We honor our volunteers at all times; but would like to say thank you to the Tulsa Area Agency on Aging, Long Term Care Ombudsmen Volunteers, Julie Atteberry, Florence Cooper, Eva Pope Garrett, Jana Gildon, Sandra Gilliam, Larry Gilliam, Michael L. Hanna, Joanna Martin, Jack Nommensen, Samuel Parker, Lenora Richards, Clara & Rob Orton, Buck Rogers, Dewey Sherbon, Oralene Sherbon, Eula Mae Shipman, Lois Williams, Shirley Marie Wright, Jennifer Sparks, Janet Carlson, and Loretta Johndrow.

There were 11 excited trainees in our February training sessions. We hope that all 11 will be certified to join us as volunteers soon.

Tulsa Area Agency on Aging is presenting Ombudsman Volunteer training sessions on April 17 & 24, June 7 & 21, August 26 & 27, 2008 from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm.

An Ombudsman Volunteer is a person who listens and receives concerns from the residents of the facilities and/or from family and friends. Often times, a resident just needs someone to listen, and when they have a concern the Ombudsman will attempt to help them resolve it. The volunteer has the authority to explore concerns and recommend corrective action to the facility according to the state and federal law.

After completion of two days of training and a background check is completed, an Ombudsman Volunteer is certified by the State Department of Human Services Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program to go into a long-term care facility for a minimum of two hours per week as an advocate for the residents.

Ombudsman supervisors can be contacted in regards to questions and concerns in residential care, assisted living, and nursing homes. Nursing home information packets and volunteer opportunity information is available. For a reservation or more information call one of the supervisors listed below:

Lesley Smiley 918-596-7685; Sarah Strecker 918-596-7210; Loretta Bailey 918-596-7657.

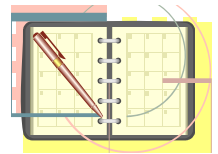
Tulsa Area Agency on Aging works to create a positive impact on the quality of life of seniors in Creek, Osage, and Tulsa Counties by planning and funding supportive services, educating the public to the needs of the elderly, networking with public and private service providers, and advocacy. It is operated by the City of Tulsa through a grant from DHS, Aging Services Division, Special Unit on Aging.


This newsletter is published bi-monthly. Call for a free subscription. Comments and suggestions are always welcome.

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SENIOR CALENDAR



- March 10 - TCCA Executive Committee - 8:30 am
- March 18 - Alzheimer's Association Caregiver Education - Step by Step - 6:00pm
- March 19 - Tri-County Council Meeting - 10:00 am
- March 21 - Good Friday - Office's Closed
- March 23 - Easter 
- March 27 - Alzheimer's Association Caregiver Essentials - Caring for a Loved On In The Hospital Or Nursing Home.
- April 7 - TCCA Executive Committee - 8:30 am
- April 10 - Senior Spelling Bee at Central Center - 1:00pm
- April 14 - Senior Day At The Capitol
- April 16 - Tri-County Council Meeting - 10:00 am
- April 24 - Alzheimer's Association Caregiver Essentials - Understanding Medicare, Medicaid Advantage & Veterans Benefits
- April 25 - Broken Arrow Seniors - Health and Resource Fair - 259-8377

Tulsa Area Agency on Aging
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