

Washburn County Aging Plan for 2025-2027



DIRECTOR NEWS

SUBMITTED BY

LINDA HAND

ADRC Director/
Aging Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OUR MISSION

The Mission of the Aging & Disability

Resource Center (ADRC) of Washburn County is to provide older adults and people with physical and intellectual disabilities the resources needed to live with dignity and security and achieve maximum independence and quality of life.

OUR GOAL

The goal of the ADRC is to strive to empower individuals to make informed choices and to streamline access to the right and appropriate services and supports.

ADRC - WHO ARE WE

ADRCs in Wisconsin are integral components under the Division of Public Health in the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS). ADRCs and Tribal ADRCs are one-stop sources for objective, reliable information about programs and services available to older adults and people with disabilities. They connect people with services and supports that allow them to maintain self-sufficiency and conserve personal resources.

WASHBURN COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Mission Statement: Washburn County government exists to serve and protect present and future citizens, the environment and quality of life in a fiscally responsible way.

Core Values: Needs of the public drive our priorities, and the services we provide.

- We provide a safe, welcoming environment.
- We communicate promptly, respectfully and accurately.
- We value and support competent, well-trained and empathetic staff.
- We promote teamwork to encourage creative problem solving and efficient use of resources.

The Washburn County 2025-2027 Aging Plan aims to address the urgent health and social service needs of the county's aging population. Washburn County, a largely rural area in north-west Wisconsin with a median age significantly higher than the state average, faces unique challenges as 37% of its population is over 60, with a notable portion of seniors living alone. These demographics reflect a growing need for coordinated support to help seniors, adults with disabilities, and caregivers access essential

healthcare, nutrition, and social resources.

CONTEXT

Washburn County is located in NW Wisconsin, 40 miles south of Superior & 75 miles NE of Minneapolis, MN. The county borders Douglas County, Burnett County, Barron County, and Sawyer County. Washburn County encompasses approximately 545,945 acres or 853 square miles, running 36 miles north to south and 24 miles east to west. Within Washburn County, there are 21 unincorporated towns, 2 cities, and 2 villages. The largest community is the City of Spooner with 2,653 residents. The county seat is the City of Shell Lake.

Population Demographics of Washburn County, WI age 65+: Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2018-2022 Estimates. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p01213.xlsx>

Per Eric Grosso, Demographer, Department of Health Services, Bureau of Aging & Disability Resources Office on Aging: All data is as up to date as of February 2024.

Washburn County Total Population - All Ages, All Races: 16,685

- Age 60+: 6,170 or 37.0%
- Age 65+: 4,553 or 27.3%
- Age 75+: 1,739 or 10.4%
- Age 85+: 495 or 3.0%
- Of these, Males aged 65+ are 2,277 or 50.0%, and Females aged 65+ are 2,276 or 50.0%.
- The Median Age overall in Wisconsin is 39.9 compared to 52.2 in Washburn County.
- The total number of households in Washburn County is 7,252, with 3,929 of these households having one or more people at least 60+ years old.
- Disability Status of Non-institutionalized Washburn Population All Persons, 65+ is 4,412 or 31.0%.
- Washburn County residents ages 65+ living alone is 4,553 or 24.0%. 20.0% or 456 are males and 28.0% or 638 are females.

Per Eric Grosso, Demographer, the Population Projections are from (09/2015). Data is not anticipated to be updated until December 2024, or later.

- Washburn County Populations Projections from 2010 through 2040 for ages 60+: 2010 - 4,619 or 29.0% and 2040 - 7,440 or 41.3%.
- Estimated Population Ages 65+ with Dementia Living in Households in Washburn County in 2020 - 470, 2025 - 578, 2030 - 707, 2035 - 790, 2040 - 837.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGING PLAN

The Washburn County Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Plan 2022-2025, has goals to address the current health

needs and services for Washburn County residents. The need priorities are Mental Health, Substance Use, and Access to Care. This plan was made in collaboration with Spooner Health, Community Alliance for Prevention (CAP), Local Businesses, Law Enforcement (LE), Drug Court, Schools, Tavern League, Health and Human Services Department, Aging & Disability Resource Center, Recovery community including alcohol anonymous, Rodeo, Municipalities, Embrace, Media, Local support groups, UW Extension, Essentia Health, and Community Counseling Services.

WASHBURN COUNTY AGING PLAN GOALS

TITLE III-B SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Goal Statement:

To reach and educate local agencies, businesses, and organizations about the services the Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Washburn County agency offers and how they can assist in making Washburn County a thriving, accessible, and Livable Community for all ages and abilities.

Plan or strategy: According to AARP, "A livable community is one that is safe and secure. It offers choices in where to live and how to get around. A livable community equitably serves residents of all ages, ability levels, incomes, races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities, and other backgrounds. Livable communities:

- Enhance personal independence,
- Allow residents to remain in their homes and communities as they age, and
- Provide opportunities for residents of all ages, ability levels, and backgrounds to engage fully in civic, economic, and social life.

Livable communities include essential features that allow residents of all ages and backgrounds to thrive. These include mixed-use zoning, safe and varied transportation options, and a diversity of housing types. Livable communities also have public spaces that benefit everyone. In addition, they provide access to essential businesses, such as grocery stores." <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/about/info-2014/what-is-a-livable-community.html>

The ADRC Governing Board requested that this goal be included in the 2025-2027 plan for Washburn County, to engage the community in our mission to provide older adults and people with physical disabilities or intellectual disabilities the resources needed to live with dignity and security and achieve maximum indepen-



This holiday season, we hope you will share the love by supporting our aging neighbors nationwide.

MILLIONS OF SENIORS ARE LEFT BEHIND, ALONE AND HUNGRY, AND THE PROBLEM IS ONLY GROWING.

1 IN 2 SENIORS LIVING ALONE
Lack the income to pay for basic needs¹

THE SENIOR POPULATION IS SET TO REACH 91M
in the next decade, with 112 EXPECTED by 2026¹

ABOUT 13 MILLION SENIORS
are threatened by or experience hunger²

MEALS ON WHEELS DELIVERS NUTRITIOUS MEALS AND COMPANIONSHIP; WE HELP SENIORS AGE IN THEIR HOMES.



"I have the sweetest people that bring meals. They are precious. I call them my angels. They are always polite and talk to me sometimes, which is good when stuck in a place. It's a breath of fresh air when they come in."

- MARY LOU, MEALS ON WHEELS CLIENT

Over the last 16 years, Subaru and its retailers have helped the Meals on Wheels network provide **MORE THAN 4.6 MILLION MEALS** to seniors in need across the country.

GET A GREAT VEHICLE AND SUPPORT A GREAT CAUSE. WITH EVERY NEW SUBARU PURCHASED OR LEASED, SUBARU AND ITS RETAILERS ARE DONATING A MINIMUM OF \$300 TO CHARITY, LIKE MEALS ON WHEELS. NOVEMBER 21, 2024 THROUGH JANUARY 2, 2025.

LEARN MORE AT

WWW.MEALSONWHEELSAMERICA.ORG/SHARETHELOVE

Information data sources available at www.MealsonWheelsAmerica.org/Facts: ¹The Escalating Issue of Senior Hunger, pg. 1; ²The Escalating Issue of Senior Hunger, pg. 2



STAY CLOSE TO HOME FOR **Surgeries, Wound Care, & Vein Treatment**

SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Appendix Removal • Colonoscopy
- Diagnostic Laparoscopies
- Gallbladder Removal • Hemorrhoid Removal
- Hernia Repair • Lesion Removals
- Port-a-cath Placement • Upper Endoscopy
- Vein Treatment • Wound Care

Learn more: SPOONERHEALTH.COM



PHOTO AND CAPTION SUBMITTED BY LAURA GOMEZ, MINONG SITE MANAGER

"Thank you to the Northwood High School Band" for providing music to Minong's Dining at 5 Event. The music was Holiday filled. Thank you students and Thank you Britney!

NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR

Written by Amanda-

Winter is upon us! Do you ever worry about grocery shopping in the wintry weather? Do you feel lonely and isolated? Do you just want to snuggle up with a good book and stay in because it's slippery outside? Or maybe you're wishing for something fun to do, like making homemade greeting cards? If you are a senior or an adult with disabilities living in Washburn County, Neighbor to Neighbor might be just what you've been looking for.

Neighbor to Neighbor's mission is to assist Washburn County seniors and adults with disabilities to live independently in their homes. We connect them with our programs and volunteers, as well as other local resources. What kinds of programs, you may ask? Here at Neighbor to Neighbor we offer a variety of programs and services. Perhaps you would like a friendly phone call or visit? We can do that. Not sure how to use your smartphone, tablet, iPad? We can help. Maybe you'd like to have some books delivered to read or listen to. We have a partnership with the Spooner Memorial Library and could bring those materials to your door. Periodically, we host events and group activities, like Caring Cards, where you can learn to make cards and send them to someone to brighten their day, or we may have a speaker or music for your enjoyment.

Many people worry about keeping their pantries and cupboards stocked, especially through the winter. Here at Neighbor to Neighbor we have several ways to help make sure you have the items you need. Grocery Grabbers is a wonderful program in partnership with Schmitz's Economart that allows you to order groceries, and our volunteers will deliver them to you. We also offer monthly Food Pantry deliveries and Stock Box distribution. We are happy to announce we can now take new participants in the stock box program if you meet the age and income requirements.

Also, we have something new and exciting happening! Executive Director Kim Timmers recently said, "We are excited to announce that Neighbor to Neighbor will be expanding its services in 2025 to include transportation for our participants who need rides for shopping, errands, and other needs around our community. Several volunteers are ready to provide this service."

As always, Neighbor to Neighbor continues to look for ways to serve our community. We have programs and volunteers ready to help. To find out more, please call, email, stop by, or visit our website

www.fiawashburn.org

Office Telephone: (715) 635-2252
Address: N 407 Front Street Suite 2

SENIOR NEWS

On the Other Side

SUBMITTED BY
ANNA MARIE BROWN

Information & Assistance
Specialist

“There are two sides to every nickel.” I used to hear that from



PHOTO SUBMITTED
Anna Marie Brown

my mom, meaning, you need to step back, take a look at the “other side”, and then make your decision.

Some of you may know I too am a caregiver.

So looking at both sides of the nickel is always a constant. In doing so, I’m able to change my

priorities. (I must admit, I have had “senioritis” for a while...)

I’ve decided to retire, effective January 2, 2025, after 33 years of service to Washburn County. I started in 1991 at Washburn County Social Services as an Economic Support Specialist, determining eligibility for public assistance. In 2006, I became the Elder Benefit Specialist for the Unit on Aging. In 2009, I became the Information & Assistance Specialist for the ADRC, and continued alone in the position until Nichole joined me in 2023.

I’ve seen many, many changes over the years. (Yes, I’m even starting to sound like a senior.) Throughout it all, you have been the only “constant”, being there the entire time with me. I’ve aged with you. I’ve laughed with you, and yes, I’ve cried with some of you.

Some say public service is

a thankless job, but I’m quite thankful for the opportunity I’ve had to serve you. So....before I join “the other side”, I’d just like to say:

Thank you for asking questions and having inquiring minds!

Thank you for allowing me to learn with and from you.

Thank you for sharing information with me and allowing me into your world.

Thank you for your patience. Thank you for many fond memories!

Remember, it takes more strength to ask for help, then it does to struggle alone.

I wish you all that you need. See you on “the other side”!

Anna

CAREGIVER CONNECTION EVENT

Are you **interested in providing services** such as housekeeping, respite, personal care, lawn care, handyman work etc.?

COME MEET WITH THOSE WHO NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

Join us

JANUARY 8TH

AT 5:00 PM

**Washburn County
Wellness Center 50+
850 W Beaverbook Ave.
Spooner WI**

All are encouraged to bring a recent background check. If you do not have one, complete information on how to attain one will be available.



The Aging and Disability Resource Center of Washburn County does not sponsor or endorse ANY Provider or Caregiver.



Linda Hand, ADRC/Aging Director
715-635-4460

ADRC of Washburn County Staff Contacts as of JANUARY 2025

This is a list of our staff by position, with contact information. If they are unavailable to answer your call, please make sure to include a detailed message, which includes your full name, phone, and description of the information and services that you are seeking. If a staff member’s message states they are out of the office, you can still call our main number to see if another staff member can assist you at 715-635-4460.

Anna Brown
Information & Assistance Specialist (I&A)
715-635-4460

Nichole Caudill
Information & Assistance Specialist (I&A)
715-635-4460

Our I&A staff provide support to all adults regarding the needs of persons with disabilities, older adults and their caregivers, and they explore what programs or services meet those needs. They take the time to get to know your situation, and collaborate with you and your support network on next steps.

Tara Macone
Elder Benefit Specialist (EBS) In Training
Unable to take appointments
The EBS helps people ages 60+ navigate both

715-635-4460 and 833-728-3400
304 2nd Street, PO Box 316,
Shell Lake, WI 54871

HOURS: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. M-F
www.co.washburn.wi.us
https://adrcwashburncounty.org/

private and public benefits, including Medicaid, Social Security, Medicare, prescription plans, Food Share and many other options to help seniors.

Theodore (Ted) Hampe
Disability Benefit Specialist (DBS)
715-635-4466

A DBS assists people age 17 ½ - 59 who have a disability. They can help with questions and applications related to Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, Food Share and other public and private benefits for adults with disabilities.

Patryce Garcia
Dementia Care Specialist (DCS)/Caregiver Support Coordinator
715-635-4477

DCS provide information and support to adults with dementia and their caregivers. The role of Caregiver Support Coordinator assists residents throughout the county who act as caregivers for elderly, disabled, and grandparents raising children in many capacities.

Valerie VanderBent
Nutrition Director
715-635-4467

The Nutrition Director oversees the Washburn County Elder Nutrition Program, which provides congregate Meals and Home Delivered Meals through our sites.

Washburn County Nutrition Site Mangers

Kristi Shoop (Birchwood) • Laura Gomez (Minong) • Char Jaeger (Shell Lake)
Mary Lawson (Spooner)
Jennifer Ganske (Spooner Cook)

Amber Anderson
Mobility Manager
715-635-4465

Washburn County Transit provides medical, nutritional, and social rides for residents age 60+ and adults with disabilities.

Washburn County Transit Drivers
• Dean Martin • Mike Schroeder
• Victoria Corton • Vacant

Lana Balts
Fiscal Assistant
715-635-4463

Aging & Disability Services Committee
Joe Hoy - Chair • George Cusick - Vice Chair
Kasey King • Jocelyn Ford • Lolita Olson

ADRC Governing Board
Bob Olsgard - Chair
Anthony Vabilaitis • Danielle Larson
Colleen Cook • Char Snarski • Kathy Fabert
Mark Van Etten • Mike Linton • Mike Schroeder

DIRECTOR NEWS

FROM FRONT PAGE

dence and quality of life. The goal of the ADRC is to empower individuals to make informed choices and to streamline access to the right and appropriate services and supports.

Since most businesses cannot attend presentations during the day, the Board suggested that we use our Chamber membership to host Business after 5 presentations. These events would invite business owners, managers, and their employees to find out what we offer for Washburn County residents and how they can receive training on how to make their businesses more user-friendly to the growing aging and disabled populations. In the future, this plan could be expanded to host presentations for other organizations, such as the Northland Area Builders Association.

TITLE III-C1 and/or III-C2 Nutrition Program

Goal statement:

- Increase congregate dining, by encouraging current and new participants to attend the lunch meal at our four senior meal sites in Washburn County.

- Provide access and assistance so Home Delivered Meal (HDM) participants can attend congregate and social events.
- Studies suggest that seniors who maintain social connections have a lower risk of developing health issues and are happier and healthier.
- Engaging in social activities provides opportunities for homebound seniors to interact with others, share experiences, and build meaningful relationships.
- Social health is important for homebound seniors because it can help prevent negative consequences like anxiety and depression, cardiovascular disease, cognitive decline, lower quality of life, and increased use of healthcare services.

To accomplish these goals, we will need to increase staffing and volunteers, to handle the growing numbers of both home-delivered meal participants and congregate diners, without having to start a waitlist.

Plan or strategy: The 2022-2024 Aging Plan goals were to open the Shell Lake Center five days a week for meals and activities. Previously, Shell Lake received congregate meals two days a week, with a site manager on-site only to serve the meal.

After reopening our meal sites, post-COVID, a movement by the Spooner area seniors began to advocate for a larger and more accessible location. This activism eventually led to the renovation and opening of the Wellness Center 50+ in Spooner.

On a trial basis, from July 2023 to July 2024, the Shell Lake site manager moved from working out of the Spooner location to Full Time (FT) in Shell Lake. This caused the Spooner Site manager to need a cook assistant to handle the number of meals required each day.

Post-COVID, the number of participants across the county continued to grow, proving to the local county government that these modifications were indeed warranted.

With the 2025 Washburn County budget, the Limited Term Employee (LTE) Cook for Spooner was approved as a permanent full-time position. The Shell Lake site manager will stay in Shell Lake full-time. County position approval was contingent upon partial funding from the Elder Nutrition program substitute cook budget. Without substitute cooks, the Nutrition Director needs to leave her position responsibilities to cover for nutrition staff needing time off. Responsibilities include but are not limited to performing in-home meal

TITLE III-D Evidence-Based Health Promotions Goal Statement:

Expand the III-D Evidence-Based Health Promotion program offerings throughout Washburn County.

Plan or strategy:

COVID shut down in-person offerings for evidence-based programming.

- Pre-COVID, there were retired senior volunteers and healthcare agencies who came forward to share their expertise, to be trained, and to lead programs. During COVID, virtual offerings were allowable, but without our agency being open to the public and the fear of the unknown, we lost all of our volunteers.
- Healthcare agencies could not facilitate

programs, as they were under strict COVID-19 restrictions.

Post-COVID,

- Volunteers contacted, but several would have to renew training.
- Healthcare agencies short-staffed and under stronger guidelines than our agency. Other reasons given some trainings required more of a commitment to provide services, and fear of contracting or giving others COVID.

Moving forward with the 2025-2027 Aging Plan, the ADRC of Washburn County will commit to regenerating the interest of community members, to become evidence-based leaders.

2025 –

- Create a strategic marketing plan, using innovative communication and promotional approaches to recruit new evidence-based leaders. Examples given are “Bring your talents to our community” and “We Want You”.
- Target retiring/retired teachers and health care workers.
- Advocate on the local, state, and federal levels for more local funding to provide volunteer leaders with paid training, mileage reimbursement, and a stipend to show appreciation for their commitment to leading evidence-based programming.
- Educate the community about the benefits of evidence-based programs, promoting health and prevent disease among older adults, while contributing to health equity in aging.
- Propose offering live virtual evidence-based programs for groups at the senior meal sites or in their own home.
- Have ADRC staff members or leader volunteers attend the Healthy Aging Summit scheduled for May 2025.

2026 –

- Provide opportunities for recruitments to attend trainings that fit their interests and lifestyles.
- Start programming, if leaders are available.

TITLE III-E CAREGIVER SUPPORTS Goal Statement: Community awareness and education of dementia and caregivers.

Plan or strategy:

- Facilitate a “Business after 5” opportunity at local senior centers in Birchwood, Minong, Shell Lake, and Spooner, inviting local business owners, managers, and staff to attend. “Dementia Awareness” training provided will offer an additional staff training at their place of business. There would be both a daytime and evening opportunity to allow businesses the ability to attend a presentation that works with their schedules. Community focus for creating a universal accessible business for people of all ages and abilities.
- Facilitate an Advocacy Day for Caregivers to come and tell their stories, inviting local, state, and federal representative to attend.
- Strategic marketing of caregiver grants, destigmatizing the acceptance for help.
- Offer more opportunities for Caregivers Connect events.
- Advocacy for the State of WI driver’s license to have the Caregiver sticker on it, like the state of MN.

BOOST YOUR BRAIN AND MEMORY

Boost Your Brain and Memory was designed to help participants implement new habits to maintain cognitive health while also practicing new skills for better memory performance.

THIS PROGRAM HAS 6 SESSIONS.

WHEN: Mondays starting January 6th
10:00 am - 11:00 pm

WHERE: BIRCHWOOD SENIOR CENTER
110 Euclid Ave.
Birchwood, WI 54817



ATTENDANCE IS FREE
(but space is limited)

Please call or email Patryce to register.
715-635-4477
pgarcia@co.washburn.wi.us




INDIGO NEWS

Another One Bites the Dust

SUBMITTED BY **DON POSH**

IndiGO Your Allies for Independence

As 2024 moves into history, I would like to honor the volunteers, the people that care and sacrifice their time and resources to make this a better world. Thank you all so much!



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Don Posh

This quote fits volunteers like a winter's glove.

President Teddy Roosevelt

"Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care"

On behalf of indiGO, I wish everyone the best for the holidays and the promise of new beginnings in 2025.

Be well we're all in this together!

For more information on independent living contact: indiGO serving Douglas, Bayfield, Iron, Price, Sawyer, Washburn, and Burnett Counties including Tribal communities of Red Cliff, Bad River, La Courte Oreilles and St Croix. Main office: 800-924-1220 V/TTY

Our non-profit agency, indiGO, aims to empower individuals living with disabilities and we are available to assist ALL ages and disabilities. We are not a vendor and do not sell any products, but we are here as a resource.



TRANSIT INFORMATION

**NAMEKAGON TRANSIT
AN OVERVIEW OF OUR SERVICES
TO OUR COMMUNITIES.**

Namekagon Transit serves Sawyer, Washburn, Barron, Southern Bayfield Counties, and the LCO Reservation.

In Washburn County, we offer daily Doorstop "Dial-A-Ride" service between Spooner and Shell Lake. Every second and fourth Wednesday, we have a doorstop service between Minong and Chicog. When a month has a 5th Wednesday, services are available for Senior Group activities.

The Dial-A-Ride Service can be used for any type of ride, whether it's for a doctor's appointment, going out to eat, getting a haircut, or simply going shopping. Our service is designed to fit into our Washburn community needs. Our Service runs Monday through Wednesday from 9:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. and Thursdays from 8 am until 3:15 pm.

We also provide through the Winter months a once-a-month Spooner/Rice Lake Extended Door Stop service area on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. A great opportunity to go shopping in Rice Lake and leave the driving to us!

The cost for a full fare is \$3.00 per trip. Seniors (55 years old and up) and disabled are \$2.00 per trip. All buses are lift-equipped and wheelchair accessible. Tokens can be purchased from either the Namekagon Transit office in Hayward, or they are available for purchase from the ADRC OF Washburn County. Cash is also accepted, but a reminder our drivers can not make change so please have the correct change before entering the Bus.

**Please call at least 24 hours in advance for any ride request at
715-634-6633 or 866-295-9599.**

You can also follow us on Facebook or check out our updated website at www.namekagontransit.com

**START THE NEW YEAR
BY LETTING GO...**

We all want the world to be perfect, but we cannot control the actions, thoughts, or words of others. When your heart and mind are filled with sorrow, anger, or overall depression, look to all the beautiful free things we are given. Call a friend. Volunteer. Play silly games that cause you to laugh hysterically with your kids and grandkids. Take a walk with your dog or visit a shelter to share your love with those abandoned. Sit outside with a cup of coffee. Sit by a campfire on a starry night. Join a local group activity at the senior center. Go fishing. Open the window, breathe the fresh air and just let them go.

The following is credit to the original author unknown, but is worth the read if you are stressed and struggling to let go.

Are you familiar with the "Let Them" theory?

I'll tell you the more I grow the more I am okay with accepting the "Let Them" in my own life and relationships. Even family can mistreat and disrespect you.

This is something that took me a very long time to learn. I used to tolerate a lot because I didn't want to lose people. I learned the hard way if they were really my people they would never treat me like that. Don't make the mistake of being so understanding and forgiving

that you overlook the fact that you're being repeatedly disrespected.

- Let them be upset.
- Let them judge you.
- Let them misunderstand you.
- Let them gossip about you,
- Let them ignore you.
- Let them be "right."
- Let them doubt you.
- Let them not like you.
- Let them not speak to you.
- Let them run your name in the ground.
- Let them make you out to be the villain.
- Whatever it is that people want to say about you, let them!
- Kindly step aside and LET THEM.

The hard truth is they know how much they are hurting you. They just simply don't care. They did it knowing it could cause them to lose you. They did it anyway. People that love you care about how they make you feel. The end. Let them go.

There will be people that would rather lose you than be honest about what they've done to you. Let them go.

The lack of respect was the closure. The lack of apology was the closure. The lack of care was the closure. The lack of accountability was the closure. The lack of honesty was the closure. Let them go.

Make the decision to no longer sit at tables where you might be the topic when you get up.

Let them go.

You can still be kind. You can even still love them deeply. But do it from the distance they created in their words and actions. Access to you is a privilege they have proven they can't be trusted with. Let them go.

You don't need to tell your side of the story. God already knows. Let God fight the battle for you. Let them go.

It's taken me a long time to get here. Sleepless nights, countless tears, managing a range of emotions filled with anger, disappointment, confusion and deep hurt. Lots of self-reflection, self-preservation, deep prayer and seeking wisdom from those much wiser than me.

If you are struggling with this please know you are not alone. We will never understand why hurt people hurt people. But we can do the hard work to grow ourselves. Because healed people do in fact heal people.

- Don't you dare let them steal your joy.
- Don't you dare let them steal your light.
- Don't you dare let them steal your peace.
- You are in control of that.

Hold tight to what you can control and release your grip on what you can't control. Let them go.

*** If you or a loved one is experiencing a mental health crisis, dial 9-8-8 to connect with a trained counselor. If you or a loved one is in immediate physical danger, call 9-1-1 and request a CIT or mental health officer***

JANUARY					LUNCH & HOME DELIVERED MEALS MENU				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY					
		HOLIDAY OBSERVANCE NO MEALS SERVED	Porcupine Meatballs Baked Potato Three Bean Salad Whole Grain Bread Crisp Grapes	Sliced Baked Ham Scalloped Potatoes Asparagus Whole Grain Bread Banana Pudding Parfait	1	2	3		
Waldorf Chicken Salad on Whole Grain Bread - Black Bean & Lentil Salad Carrot Sticks Crisp Grapes MINONG DINING AT 5	BRUNCH FOR LUNCH Blueberry French Toast Bake Sausage Links Roasted Breakfast Potatoes - Apple Juice Clementine	Seasoned Chicken Breast w/a Mushroom Gravy over Brown Rice, California Medley Veggies Creamed Spinach Apple Crisp	Beef Pot Roast with Potatoes, Onions, Carrots & Celery Whole Grain Bread Fresh Side Salad Pears	Cheeseburger with Lettuce, Tomato, Onion, Pickles, and Mayo on WG Bun Sweet Potato Fries Black Bean Brownie	6	7	8	9	10
Sweet & Sour Pork with Stir Fry Veggies over Brown Rice Egg Roll Mandarin Oranges SHELL LAKE DINING AT 5	Curry Chicken Cranberry Wrap Marinated Vegetable Salad Peaches Healthy Cookie Dough Bites	SOUP & SALAD DAY Cheesy Potato & Ham Soup served with a Ham & Swiss Sandwich with Lettuce, Tomato & Onion Blueberry Cobbler	Mongolian Beef served with Cilantro Lime Rice Sauteed Bell Peppers Garlic Green Beans Pineapple	Creamy Chicken & Mixed Veggies over Biscuits Baby Red Potatoes Stewed Tomatoes Cook's Choice Cookie	13	14	15	16	17
Beef Tips in Gravy Mashed Potatoes Dill Roasted Carrots WG Bread Fresh Orange SPOONER DINING AT 5	Loaded Chicken Burrito Bowl over Brown Rice Black Bean & Corn Salsa Tropical Fruit Salad	Turkey Pot Pie Roasted Winter Squash Whole Grain Bread Baked Apple Dessert	MEDITERRANEAN FUSION Greek Chicken & Potatoes Chickpea Marinara Greek Side Salad Whole Grain Bread Sicilian Orange Cake	Old Fashioned Goulash California Vegetable Medley Whole Grain Bread Pears	20	21	22	23	24
Pulled BBQ Chicken Sandwich on a W/G Bun Baked Beans Tomato & Cucumber Salad Pineapple	Seasoned Pork Roast Mashed Potatoes and Gravy Roasted Green Beans WG Bread Citrus Winter Salad BIRCHWOOD DINING AT 5	Taco Stuffed Sweet Potato Mexican Street Corn Bake Whole Grain Bread Fruit Salad	Chicken Cordon Bleu Cheesy Broccoli Brown Rice Asparagus Chocolate Zucchini Cake Fresh Apple	CLOSED FOR STAFF TRAINING NO MEALS SERVED OR DELIVERED	27	28	29	30	31
<p>• ALL MEALS SERVED WITH 1% MILK • MENU SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE DUE TO FOOD AVAILABILITY FOR RESERVATIONS CALL: Spooner Wellness Center: 715-635-8283 • Shell Lake Senior Center: 715-468-4750 Birchwood Senior Center: 715-354-3001 • Minong Senior Center: 715-466-4448 EVERYONE IS WELCOME: Those eligible to participate on a contribution basis include anyone age sixty and older. Suggested contribution is \$6.00 - \$8.00 per meal. Individuals under the age of sixty are welcome, but must pay the full meal cost of \$15.00 to participate.</p>									



**MINONG MENU
MONDAY, JANUARY 6**
Kale Lentil Soup with Cornbread
Old Fashioned Pot Roast
Mashed Potatoes
Roasted Baby Broccoli and Carrots
Banana Pudding Parfait

**SHELL LAKE MENU
MONDAY, JANUARY 13**
Surf and Turf Alfredo
(Beef and Shrimp over Fettuccine)
California Blend Vegetables
Caesar Salad • Garlic Bread
Char's Choice Dessert

**SPOONER MENU
MONDAY, JANUARY 20**
Chicken & Ribs • Cheesy Potatoes
California Medley Vegetables
Coleslaw • Cornbread
Warm Peach Crisp

**BIRCHWOOD MENU
TUESDAY, JANUARY 28**
Stuffed Pork Chop
Baked Potato • Garlic Green Beans
Spinach Strawberry Salad
Fresh Bread
Kristi's Choice Dessert

=====

Suggested donation is \$8.00 - \$10.00
Cost: \$15.00 for anyone under 60 years old.
**PLEASE MAKE RESERVATIONS
24 HOURS IN ADVANCE**
Shell Lake: 715-468-4750 • Spooner: 715-635-8283
Minong: 715-466-4448 • Birchwood: 715-354-3001

Make a Difference
VOLUNTEER!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

- Would you like to do something meaningful to give back to the community?
- Do you like helping people in need?
- Would you like to make people smile?

Make a difference! Become a Home Delivered Meals Volunteer Today!

YOU GIVE US:

- One day per week (approximately 3 hrs.)
- Compassion for people in need
- You own transportation

WE GIVE YOU:

- A hot, nutritious lunch
- Equipment needed to keep food safe
- Mileage reimbursement

- A bunch of new friends and the best feeling of fulfillment

If interested in volunteering for meal delivery, please contact Valerie at the Aging and Disability Resource Center at 715-635-4467

SENIOR CENTER NEWS

VERDELL PETTEY
WASHBURN COUNTY WELLNESS CENTER
50+ NEWS
 Verdellpettey@gmail.com

A new year can be mysterious. We don't know what to expect! I didn't know what to expect.....lifting up the boat cover on my son's stored boat. He texted me to say that his security camera showed movement under the boat cover! As he was 300 miles away and I was only 20 miles away, I got my courage up to go check it out. I thought it was wise to pick up Gail to help with this. We left the car running for a fast getaway outside the pole barn. I grabbed my camera as Gail slowly lifted the cover. Anything that would jump out would get him first. Perfect plan. There was nothing. Not even a trace of nothing. After my heart stopped racing, I put more rodent repellent in the boat and left. Moral of the story: don't overthink it. Lift the cover and let the New Year roll in.

Noon dining at the center is available by calling 715-635-8283 a day in advance. Several diners and even some Meals on Wheels recipients raved about the November 21st turkey dinner. It was the best ever with all the trimmings.

Our big screen has been busy. First Friday Flicks showed the movie "You Gotta Believe" on December 6. Starting in February we'll have two movie dates a month in case you were unable to make the first one. Check the schedule at the center or our Facebook page. Packer games continue to be televised too. All of this is free; just come; donations are welcomed. Bring your own snack and sit back and enjoy.

Make some plans to join the ADRC bus trip to the Chanhassen Theatre on Feb. 26 for the show "GREASE." A contribution of \$50 is suggested. The bus leaves the Washburn County Service Center in Shell Lake at 8AM that day. Call Amber Anderson at 715-635-4465 for more details or to register.

The December Dining @ 5 was a sell out for the Prime Rib dinner. John Sedor, guitarist, entertained us with 70s and 80s music as we enjoyed Mint Holiday Mocktails. Table settings and decorations were done by Kay Hill and her daughter. Room decorations were done by volunteers at the center too. Thank you for making it so festive.

"Dining with Darrel" takes us to downtown

SPOONER SENIOR CENTER WASHBURN COUNTY WELLNESS CENTER 50+ 850 W. Beaverbrook Ave., Spooner | 715.635.8283

NUTRITION SITE MANAGER: MARY LAWSON
 CO-CHAIRMEN: CARYL LIGLER | 715-635-8215 and LYNN BEARD | 715.520.3569

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
		1 CLOSED Dining Site Closed No Meals Served or Delivered	2 Mah Jongg 9 am Games 10 am Dining 12 pm Hand and Foot 1 pm	3 Dining 12 pm First Friday Flicks 1 pm
6 Dining 12 pm Cribbage, Mexican Train 1 pm Tai Chi 1 pm	7 Dining 12 pm Mah Jongg 1 pm	8 Chair Dancing 9:30 am Dining 12 pm 500 & Bridge 1 pm AmVets Monthly Meeting 6:30 pm	9 Mah Jongg 9 am Games 10 am Dining 12 pm Hand and Foot 1 pm	10 Dining 12 pm
13 Dining 12 pm Cribbage, Mexican Train 1 pm Tai Chi 1 pm	14 Dining 12 pm Mah Jongg 1 pm	15 Chair Dancing 9:30 am Dining 12 pm 500 & Bridge 1 pm	16 Mah Jongg 9 am Games 10 am Dining 12 pm Hand and Foot 1 pm	17 Dining 12 pm
20 Dining 12 pm Cribbage, Mexican Train 1 pm Tai Chi 1 pm	21 Dining 12 pm Mah Jongg 1 pm	22 Chair Dancing 9:30 am Dining 12 pm 500 & Bridge 1 pm	23 Mah Jongg 9 am Games 10 am Dining 12 pm Hand and Foot 1 pm	24 Dining 12 pm
27 Dining 12 pm Cribbage, Mexican Train 1 pm Tai Chi 1 pm	28 Dining 12 pm Mah Jongg 1 pm	29 Chair Dancing 9:30 am Dining 12 pm 500 & Bridge 1 pm	30 Mah Jongg 9 am Games 10 am Dining 12 pm Hand and Foot 1 pm	31 CLOSED FOR STAFF TRAINING NO MEALS SERVED OR DELIVERED

Spooner where we found him munching on a bag of popcorn at the hardware store. He also did a few "Cookie Walks" in the area churches. He sure gets around!

The center's board meeting is January 27th @ 10:30. Everyone is welcome to come help plan our activities. Contact Verdell at 507-696-8263 if you would like to occasionally volunteer for different events. There are no paid employees to manage our fun.

Watch our Facebook page or the bulletin board at the center as we plan "Senior Lunch Out" during the coming winter months. We would meet at area restaurants for a noon

meal. Your suggestions for places are welcomed.

The weather rock at the Scout Camp is sticky! (It's a rock hung outside on a teepee frame. The rock's condition forecasts the weather). I spilled my hot chocolate on it because it's so cold. I had the most wonderful pine fragrance in my car driving back from the holidays.. The longer I drove, the warmer my car became, making the fragrance even stronger. THEN I remembered my grandson put the wreath in my backseat that I bought from his scout troop! Hope you have a Happy New Year! See you at the center!!

WARNING! WARNING!

Do not fall for the "Brushing" Scams Across the U.S.

1. Free Unexpected Packages Delivered to your home
2. QR Code Package Scam

<https://www.wisbusiness.com/2024/wisconsin-bbb-tip-brushing-scam-indicates-a-serious-problem-for-victims/>

Wisconsin BBB: Tip: "Brushing" scam indicates

a serious problem for victims Milwaukee, Wis. – Free box loads of merchandise from Amazon or other companies right on your doorstep! What could be bad about getting the Santa treatment all year long? Plenty! Better Business Bureau (BBB) warns consumers that this recent scam has a scary downside. You are not the one who hit the jackpot; a scammer is the real winner.

This scam is called brushing, and it has recently been popping up nationwide. Suddenly, boxes of unordered (by the recipient) merchandise from Amazon or other online sellers begin arriving. There is no return address, or sometimes

it just appears to come from Amazon or another retailer, and the receiver has yet to learn who ordered the items. The items are varied. For example, in one case, a humidifier, a hand warmer, a flashlight, a Bluetooth speaker, and a computer vacuum cleaner arrived unordered. Often, the items received are lightweight and inexpensive to ship, such as ping pong balls, face masks, or seeds from China.

Why would such merchandise be sent to you if you didn't request it? The companies, usually



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

- Employers.
- Police officers.
- Hospital staff.
- First responders.
- Caring individuals.

WHY MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among adults.

On average,
130
people die by
suicide every day.

Source: American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

From 1999 to 2019,
841,000
people died from
drug overdoses.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Nearly
1 IN 5
in the U.S. lives
with a mental illness.

Source: National Institute of Mental Health

Sources

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. (n.d.). *Suicide statistics*. <https://afsp.org/suicide-statistics/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). *Drug overdose deaths*. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/deaths/index.html>

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). (n.d.). *Mental illness*. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness>

REGISTER TODAY!

Delivery Format:

Blended/In Person

Date and Time:

Jan 31, 2025 8-4pm

Location:

Washburn County Board Room: 304 2nd St, Shell Lake, WI

Where to Register:

<https://linktr.ee/healthywashco>



The course will teach you how to apply the MHFA Action Plan (ALGEE):

- **A**ssess for risk of suicide or harm.
- **L**isten nonjudgmentally.
- **G**ive reassurance and information.
- **E**ncourage appropriate professional help.
- **E**ncourage self-help and other support strategies.

Please note: a 30 minute lunch break will be given, but lunch will not be provided.

SENIOR CENTER NEWS

POLLY LEINWANDER

MASC President

Minong Area Senior Center

MINONG AREA SENIOR CENTER

700 Houston Street, Minong | 715.466.4448

NUTRITION SITE MANAGER: LAURA GOMEZ - 715.466.4448

PRESIDENT: POLLY LEINWANDER

HELLO FROM THE MASC,

Monday, December 2nd was the Christmas Dining @ Five at the Minong Area Senior Center. The center came to life with all of the Christmas decorations including ornaments and fresh greenery balls hanging from the ceiling, a Christmas wall drop, and the Christmas tree. The evening began with Christmas music provided by 5 of our local high school students and they performed wonderfully. What would Christmas be without SANTA! Ho Ho Ho! As guests were enjoying the fresh appetizers from the table tree charcuterie, the pesto tree pastry and sipping on their Christmas punch, they awaited their turn for a picture with Santa. Next on the menu was the holiday salad bar consisting of 3 distinctive salads including Kale, Brussel Sprouts, Apple Cole Slaw, and fresh veggies with dip. The main course consisted of BBQ Ribs and a Twice Baked Potato followed by Holiday Truffles made by Laura. What an exceptional Dining @ Five dinner! Tickets were drawn for the door prizes which were the fresh greenery balls and the evening ended with our signature, bingo game. Guests lingered after the bingo game, enjoying the friendships and atmosphere of the center.

Our many thanks to Laura and her kitchen staff, who are so incredible for all that they do, the ADRC Nutrition program, and the many volunteers that made this an outstanding Christmas Dining @ Five evening.

Positions open for the 2025 Minong Area Senior Center board included Vice President and Secretary, (2 year terms) and 5 members at large (1 year term). Running unopposed for Vice President Lynne Thompson, and Secretary Betty Glasser, filled these 2 positions. The newly elected members at large include:

Nancy Ahlert, Ron Brown, Judy Mullikin, Dave Stabenow and Kirk Walters. Joyce Palucci remains as Treasurer and Polly Leinwander as President, fulfilling their 2 year terms.

Congratulations to all of the board members, who voluntarily make the commitment, to make decisions that are in the best interest of the Minong Area Senior Center. We want to Thank Sandy Ericson and Barb Grubbs for their past service to the Minong Area Senior Center Board. It was greatly appreciated.

December was a busy month at the center. We made 30 gnomes for the home-bound Christmas bags, enjoyed "Lunch With Friends", sponsored the Children's Christmas party for 60 children, including pictures with Santa and gift bags, and packed 30 Christmas bags filled with a variety of items for the home bound. We also took a moment to enjoy the Congregate Christmas Dinner and party with our fellow seniors and friends, and had a great time playing the White Elephant Game.

Looking back at 2024 - what a year! Our Senior Center is thriving! The MASC board accomplished numerous tasks, more people are enjoying the congregare meals, our Dining @ Five has a monthly waiting list, and people are enjoying the weekly/monthly events. Our goal for 2025 is to get more seniors coming to the center, get involved, make new friendships and to enjoy what the center has to offer. There's nothing more relaxing than coming to the center for a cup of coffee, the congregare meal, social time, getting to know each other better and maybe playing some cards, cribbage or Farkle. We all have so much in common to

share.

Please check the Spooner Advocate, "Minong Area Senior Center News", for weekly updates.

HIGHLIGHTS FOR JANUARY:

January 1st, Center Closed
 January 6th, Dining @ Five
 January 8th, Lunch With Friends 11:30am.
 MASC Board Meeting, 1:30pm
 January 11th Potluck/Bingo Noon

WEEKLY/MONTHLY CALENDAR:

Congregate meals Monday-Friday, 11:30am.
 Need to register 1 day in advance. 715-466-4448

Tuesday: Farkle: 12:00pm (1st, 3rd & 5th Tuesday's of the month)

Cards: 12:00pm (2nd & 4th Tuesday's of the month)

WII Bowling:

12:00pm every Tuesday

Wednesday: Pocket of Prayer 7:00am
 MASC Board Meeting: 1:30pm (2nd Wednesday monthly)
 Foot Care 3rd Wednesday of the month) Call 715-466-4299 to schedule time.

Thursday: Cribbage 12:30

Saturday: 2nd Saturday each month (some exceptions but will be advertised if changed) Potluck-noon, Bingo-1:00pm

Wishing Everyone a Healthy and a Blessed 2025 from all of us at the Minong Area Senior Center.

CHICOG - THEN AND NOW

JOANN MALEK

Chicog - Then and Now

Cy Sipe was a master carpenter. He came to Chicog to work on a four-story lodge owned by C. Richard Titus. His task was to finish the cellar, adding public rest rooms and creating a bar to be dubbed The Briar Patch. Cy and wife Penny lived next door for two years, in the log caretaker's residence. Penny still wishes she had photos taken from the widow's walk on the top floor of the large house, one in summer, the other in winter. "It was a beautiful property."

Long before that, in 1922, Charles and Julia Hoinville travelled by train from Chicago, then in an open sleigh for twenty-six more miles, to view 1,200 acres owned by the railroad. After seeing its beauty they purchased the property and called it Hoinville Hills. Namekagon Lake was renamed Hoinville Lake. The home they built was topped with an open cupola, reached from the third story by an indoor ladder. The fireplace was made of stones collected from

local fields.

Ahead of its time, the house boasted electricity and indoor plumbing. Firewood was used for cooking and heating. Ice for refrigeration was cut from the lake and stored in a separate ice house.

When Charles died in 1955, the property was sold to Paradise Sportsmen's Club headquartered in Chicago. Five cottages were added on the west side of Hoinville Lake. Armed guards were posted at the entrance. Rumor has it the group was involved with the mafia.

Camp Adventure, Inc. bought the property in 1960. This owner fraudulently sold three sets of 99-year leases and subsequently fled to Mexico to avoid law suits.

Since then the property has been divided and has changed hands several more times. In the sixties and seventies owners were Northwest Suburban Council of the Boy Scouts from Des Plaines, Ill. Campsites, outhouses, activity building, shower house, and trading post were added. Hundreds of logs and tons of sand were put down to prevent the swamp road on the

north end of the lake from washing out. Ten years after opening for wilderness camping nearly two thousand Scouts attended the camp, but by 1976 the high cost of gasoline rendered traveling the four hundred miles from Illinois unaffordable.

Titus owned the property for ten years beginning in 1978. In April of 1980 a 10,000-acre forest fire burned more than one hundred acres of the land south of the lake.

In 1988, Bethany Lutheran College of Mankato, MN purchased the property for educational purposes. It was renamed The Schwan Center. During their tenure five duplexes were built, later Eagle Lodge Conference Center and two hotel wings.

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans purchased the property in 2005, renamed it Heartwood Conference Center and Retreat. The mission was togetherness, learning, celebration, overall wellness. Capital improvements included

CHICOG

FROM PAGE 12

addition of a third hotel, and the Welcome Center along Highway 77.

In 2019, the property was sold again, renamed Heartwood Resort and Conference Center. For the first time in decades, it was opened to the public.

“The amenities on site are endless in the beautiful wilderness that is Heartwood Resort.”

In January of 2024, another sale, to Minnesota Catholic Youth Partnership, and another name change. Trinity Woods Catholic Retreat Center is again a youth camp, with large groups of middle-school-aged children attending Extreme Faith programs each week throughout the summer. In other seasons the center will host Faith and Science classes and weekend retreats. The web of cross-country ski trails that many have enjoyed in the past will be maintained but will not be offered for local access.

When St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Clements, MN closed its doors for good, historic and fragile altar pieces were donated to Trinity Woods. A chapel was created on the lower level of Eagle Lodge. Ancient stained glass windows were installed, back-lighted to capture their beauty. Another touch of loveliness to a property that has been recognized as beautiful throughout the century.

I do wish that the remarkable Hoinville home



PHOTO SUBMITTED

had survived all the development and was still a part of the scene.

IMPORTANT JANUARY DATES

Thursdays, 11-3, Walkabouts, town hall
Wednesday 1/8, 6pm, monthly Chicog meeting
Wednesdays 1/8&22, Namekagen Transit Ser-

vice
Thursday 1/9, 11-1, Bibliodragon, town hall
Wednesday 1/22, 10:30-12, Books&Bread, Beaverbrook
Town Website: www.townofchicog.com

Thank you for reading Chicog-Then and Now

WINTER WEATHER AWARENESS

From the Desk of:

Carol Buck, CEM-WI, Washburn County Emergency Management Director

WI State Certified EM, PSAP Coord., PIO, TLO, & ICP/COMM Team Manager

PO Box 429 - 421 Hwy 63

Shell Lake, WI 54871

715-468-4730

November 18-22 was Winter Weather Awareness Week in Wisconsin. Although we have experienced mild weather into mid-November, there are still many months ahead.

MADISON, Wis. – “Winter weather can lead to dangerous conditions including snowstorms, icy roads, and below freezing temperatures, said Greg Engle, Wisconsin Emergency Management administrator. “By planning ahead, we can ensure families and communities are safe during the colder winter months.” Being aware of weather conditions is essential for being prepared. The National Weather Service (NWS) and other reliable local sources will have forecast information to inform you of potential inclement weather. Recently, the NWS simplified their cold weather terminology.

- Wind Chill Watches were renamed to an Extreme Cold Watch
- Wind Chill Warnings were renamed to an Extreme Cold Warning
- Wind Chill Advisory was renamed a Cold Weather Advisory

“These changes are part of a nation-wide ef-

fort to simplify the amount of hazard headlines the National Weather Service has,” said Tim Halbach. “Instead of using separate terms like “Extreme Cold” and “Wind Chill” warnings to describe similar cold conditions, they will now use just one: “Extreme Cold Watch/Warning/Advisory. This is because there are situations that can be extremely cold without much wind.”

Extreme cold temperatures can be dangerous for many people, leading to cold-related illnesses and injuries such as hypothermia and frostbite. There were 45 cold-related deaths in the state during the winter months of 2023-2024*, according to preliminary data from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. According to that data, there were 861 emergency department visits and 225 hospitalizations in the state due to cold-related illnesses. “Getting ready for snow and bitter cold before they hit can help prevent trips to the emergency room and it might even save a life,” said Paula Tran, state health officer and administrator for the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. “During cold snaps, it’s especially important to check on neighbors and loved ones to make sure they’re warm enough where they are and help get them to a warm space if needed.”

When dangerously cold temperatures arrive, it is important to follow extreme cold warnings and minimize time outdoors, including pets. If you have to be outside, dress for the weather and make sure, you cover exposed skin to reduce your risk of frostbite and hypothermia. Call 211 or visit <https://211wisconsin.com-communityos.org/> to find local warming centers and free winter clothing outlets. Finally, take precautions to avoid slips, trips, and falls in icy conditions and snow shoveling injuries.

When dangerously cold temperatures arrive, it is important to reduce outdoor activities for your family, including your pets. Make sure you wear several layers of loose-fitting, lightweight clothing instead of a single heavy layer. Outerwear should be tightly woven and water repellent. Make sure you cover exposed skin to reduce your risk. It is also important to know the signs and symptoms of frostbite and hypothermia.

Ice and snow on the roads are a major threat to drivers throughout the state, causing thousands of motor vehicle crashes each year. Preliminary data from the Wisconsin State Patrol shows nine people were killed and 2,262 were injured in the state last winter* from crashes involving winter road conditions.

“We all have a responsibility to protect each other and our plow drivers who work long hours to keep roads clear and help us get where we need to go,” WisDOT Secretary Kristina Boardman said. “We ask drivers to remember the basics: slow down, maintain extra following distance from other vehicles and avoid distractions so you can focus on getting to your destination safely. Check 511 Wisconsin to stay up to date on road conditions and know before you go.”

511 Wisconsin is a free website and mobile app that provides traffic and route-specific information. It is important to check 511 Wisconsin before you drive. To learn more about traffic information or check out hundreds of traffic cameras statewide, people can access the mobile-friendly website at www.511wi.gov.

At home or in your car, winter emergency kits

WINTER READY TIPS

MAKING AN EMERGENCY CAR KIT

Plan long trips carefully and listen to the radio or television for up-to-date weather forecasts and road conditions. In bad weather drive only if absolutely necessary.

Items to have in your car's emergency kit include:

- Drinking water and snacks
- First Aide Kit
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Ice scraper and snow brush
- Jumper cables
- Sand or non-clumping cat litter
- Snow shovel
- Multi-tool
- Reflective warning triangles or road side flares
- Blankets and extra warm clothing
- Winter Boots & Gloves
- Phone Charger

WINTER TRAVEL SAFELY

Expect the unexpected to drive safely in Wisconsin winters.

- **Keep your distance**
 - Stay 200 feet behind snowplows
 - Leave room to brake
- **Be Prepared**
 - Have a fully charged phone and emergency kit in your vehicle
- **Clear It Before You Go**
 - Remove ice and snow from vehicle windows, lights, and mirrors
- **Clear It Before You Go**
 - Remove ice and snow from vehicle windows, lights, and mirrors
- **Go Slow In Ice and Snow**
 - Drive for conditions
- **Stay Focused**
 - Buckle Up, Phone Down
- **You Cruise, You Lose**
 - Avoid cruise control in winter conditions

PREPARING FOR WINTER STORMS

If the forecast shows the storm a few days out:

- Have emergency supplies for your home and vehicle
- Check your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors
- Replenish fuel for your vehicle and heating sources

The day before the storm:

- Adjust plans
- Have multiple ways to receive emergency alerts
- Bring pets indoors, and ensure they have water

During and after the storm:

- Check on family and neighbors
- Properly ventilate emergency heat sources
- Keep generators at least 20 ft. from your home
- Take it easy when shoveling

WINTER

FROM PAGE 14

should include items such as food, water, a flashlight and batteries, and blankets. In your vehicle, include a snow shovel, extra gloves and hats, cell phone charger, and kitty litter or sand to help give your wheels traction on icy roads if your vehicle is stuck.

To prepare for winter storms, stock up on additional supplies and have a plan for what to do if you lose power at home. Plan for extra batteries and other alternative power sources for your needs, including power banks or a generator. Keep generator safety in mind while it is in operation to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning and other hazards.

- Generators should be used outdoors and at least 20 feet away from windows, doors, and attached garages
- Make sure you have working carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home
- Follow manufacturer's instructions carefully

According to the NWS, Wisconsin experiences an average of three to six winter storms during the season. Last winter, the highest one-day snowfall total in the state of 17 inches was reported in Jackson, located in Washington County on Jan. 13, 2024. Hurley in Iron County recorded 75.5-inches of snow last winter, giving it the highest seasonal snowfall total in the state. The coldest temperature recorded in Wisconsin last winter was -18 degrees Fahrenheit on Jan. 15-16, 2024, in Clinton, located in Rock County.

You can also follow ReadyWisconsin on Facebook, X, and Instagram for tips throughout the winter months and updates on dangerous weather conditions.

Here are just a few tips listed at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/climate/winter-weather.htm>

Washburn County 01/25/2023,
Submitted by L. Hand

WINTERIZE YOUR HOME

- Insulate any water lines that run along exterior walls so your water supply will be less likely to freeze.
- Seal cracks, caulk and weather-strip drafty doors and windows.
- Install storm windows and insulated doors.
- Install heating tape on your roof if you have problems with ice dams.
- Cover windows with plastic from the inside.
 - Repair roof leaks.
 - Cut away tree branches that could fall on your home or other structures during a storm.

ASSEMBLE HOME MAINTENANCE ITEMS

- Prepare to heat your home during a power failure:
 - Dry firewood for a fireplace or wood stove
 - Kerosene for a kerosene heater
 - Furnace fuel (coal, propane, or oil)
- Never use a gas stove, charcoal or gas grill, or electric generator inside to heat your home as this may cause carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Prepare to use a snow shovel or snow blower and roof rake
- Secure sand for traction or a sidewalk deicer. (Calcium chloride is least harmful and has the lowest ice-melting point of -6°F.) Check with your local town or village, or provide sand to residents.

HAVE YOUR CHIMNEY OR FLUE INSPECTED EACH YEAR

If you plan to use a fireplace or wood stove for emergency heating, have your chimney or flue inspected each year. Ask your local fire department to recommend an inspector or find one online.

SCHEDULE A FURNACE CHECKUP ANNUALLY

Before the heating season arrives, have your furnace system and venting checked by a qualified technician to ensure they are functioning properly. Be sure to change your furnace filters monthly.

INSTALL SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

- Install a smoke detector and a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector. Test them monthly and replace batteries twice a year.
- If you plan to use a fireplace, outdoor wood boiler (wood stove), or kerosene heater, it is especially important to install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors near the heated area.
- Keep a multipurpose, dry-chemical fire extinguisher nearby.
- All fuel-burning equipment should be vented to the outside.

KEEP AN EASY-TO-READ THERMOMETER INSIDE YOUR HOME FOR OLDER ADULTS

If you or a loved one are over 65 years old, place an easy-to-read thermometer in a visible indoor location. Check the temperature of your home often during the winter months.

Our ability to feel a change in temperature decreases with age, so older adults are more susceptible to health problems caused by extreme cold.

*Get on a waiting list **NOW**
for your housing needs **LATER***

Washburn County Housing Authority
is accepting applications for their rental properties.
1 & 2 bedroom units

*Schricker Manor & Goslin Court (Spooner)
West Side Manor (Shell Lake) • Birch Haven Manor (Birchwood)*

Call for details: 715-635-2321

THIS INSTITUTION IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER

BRUSHING

FROM PAGE 11

foreign, third-party sellers that are sending the items are simply using your address that they discovered online. They intend to make it appear that you wrote a glowing online review of their merchandise and that you are a verified buyer of that merchandise. They then post a fake, positive review to improve their products' ratings, which means more sales. The payoff is highly profitable from their perspective.

In a recent [BBB Scam Tracker Report](#), one consumer shared, "A mysterious package was delivered to my home from a person I do not know, without me ordering any such package. When I tried to look up the return address, the search returned "brushing scam" hits."

WHY IT'S BAD NEWS FOR YOU

The fact that someone could have the items sent to you as if you purchased them indicates that they have some of your personal information, such as your name, address, and, possibly, phone number. Once the information is online, it could be used for numerous crooked enterprises.

The fake online review angle is only one way they benefit. By using the brushing scam, they also are increasing their sales numbers. After all, they aren't purchasing the items since the payment goes right back to them. Increased sales numbers, even though padded with fake purchases, look good for the company and help lead to more sales.

Then there is the "porch pirate" angle. There are instances where thieves use other people's mailing addresses and accounts, then watch for the delivery of the package so they can steal it from the door before the resident gets it.

QR Code Scam: <https://wkdq.com/beware-indiana-package-scam-that-will-steal-all-of-your-passwords/>

If you receive a random package on your porch, you may be a victim of a vicious new scam that's going around Indiana and across the country, that will steal all the apps along with passwords off of your phone.

There are so many ways people can get scammed nowadays. You could get a threatening phone call from a scammer, phishing email scams, social media scams, and even text message scams. It's honestly kind of scary, especial-



PHOTO SUBMITTED

ly for the elderly, who typically fall victim more often. These scammers have gotten very creative throughout the years. It's hard not only to keep up with them, but it has also gotten even harder to decipher what is legitimate and what is a scam. This is just another example of one of those scams.

Let's say you come home to find a package from Amazon or another company at your front door. You didn't order anything, but it's addressed to you. It is your lucky day, right? What could be bad about receiving a free gift? A lot!

DON'T FALL FOR THIS QR CODE PACKAGE SCAM

Here's what happens: villains will have an item of relatively little value sent to your door. It will have a QR code on the box advising you to scan it to find out who the sender is. The problem is that QR code is really a program that will allow the perpetrators to steal all of your account info and passwords giving them access to your bank and other online accounts. According to the Better Business Bureau, this scam is called brushing, and it has recently been popping up nationwide.

The rule of thumb is to NEVER scan a QR code unless you know it comes from a reputable source, and you can verify that reputable source can confirm the reason you're being asked to scan it. These scammers are very clever. They can also spoof reputable businesses and serve you codes that can rob you blind.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

• **Notify the retailer.** Brushing and fake reviews are against Amazon's policies, so

contact [Amazon Customer Service](#) if this happens to you and the product appears to come from Amazon. They will investigate and take action against the bad actor. Amazon also takes security seriously and encourages customers to [report fraudulent purchases](#) or other security issues. If the package appears to come through another established business, go directly to their website to get their contact information. If you prefer to contact the business by phone, be cautious about [searching for support phone numbers](#).

• **Attempt to identify the sender.** If you can identify the sender of unordered packages, consider checking for potential false reviews in your name – and ask for the reviews to be removed.

• **Check your account for recent orders.** Some targets of brushing scams can be deluged with unordered packages, creating a serious problem. If this happens, consider whether to refuse package delivery at your home address and temporarily direct items that you did order to a package acceptance service.

• **Change your account passwords.** This may be a sign that personal information has been compromised, and to improve account security, keep a close eye on credit reports and credit card bills.

• **You are allowed to keep the merchandise.** The [Federal Trade Commission](#) says you have a legal right to keep unordered merchandise.

• **Protect your identity.** BBB advises to take all necessary precautions to prevent identity theft. Be careful when entering personal information online, and ensure you use a secure site.

Other questions regarding shipments of unordered merchandise may be directed to your local [BBB](#) or visit [BBB.org](#).

Report suspicious activities to [BBB Scam Tracker](#).

Read more about [BBB Accreditation Standards](#) and [BBB Standards for Trust](#).

View the [online](#) version

For more information or further inquiries, contact the Wisconsin [BBB](#) at www.bbb.org/wisconsin, 414-847-6000 or 1-800-273-1002. Consumers also can find more information about how to protect themselves from scams by following the Wisconsin [BBB](#) on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

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- Chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat
- Text 838255

- Scan the QR code to download Veterans Crisis Line resources

U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



SENIOR NEWS

Avoid Making Big Decisions After Experiencing a Death

By Chris Raymond
 Reviewed by Rachel Goldman, PhD, FTOS
 Updated on July 21, 2020

If you're grieving the death of a spouse or close family member, now isn't the time for major life decisions. The death of a loved one is among the most stressful events a person can experience, according to the Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory, also known as the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS).¹

Given the emotional and physical toll a death can have on survivors, it's far from the best time to make serious decisions.

BIG DECISIONS THAT SHOULD WAIT

In particular, one should avoid making any major changes during the mourning period, if at all possible.

MOVING TO A NEW HOME

If you're thinking of selling your home or moving because a loved one died, you should delay this decision for at least six months, if possible, because of the other stressors you're likely also experiencing.

Finding a new place, selling your existing home, packing, and actually moving to a new residence generally proves a huge undertaking at any time. In addition to the fact that you're wracked physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually following your loss and you've already had to complete many tasks after a loved one's death, moving may not be something you want to do at this point.

While it might be tempting to move to escape household reminders of your deceased loved one, relocating may not be in your best interest financially. It's entirely possible that you might view your living or financial situation differently after several months or after the settling of your loved one's estate. So, avoid making a hasty decision if you can.

DISCARDING PERSONAL ITEMS

If you've ever acted rashly in an emotional moment by saying or doing something you later regret-

ted, then you should trust that now is not the time to trash mementos, keepsakes, photographs, and other reminders of your beloved even if these items trigger sadness and tears while your grief feels freshest.

Once hauled to the curb and taken away, these irreplaceable tangible connections between you and someone you love will be lost to you forever. Therefore, you should delay throwing out any items that are linked to your loved one as you grieve.

In time, perhaps six months or a year, you might feel differently as you begin adjusting to life after the loss of your loved one. At the very least, you will probably feel better equipped with the passage of time to assess what you truly wish to keep and what you want to toss.

If you simply cannot tolerate these physical reminders right now, consider boxing them up and storing them in a spare room, garage, basement, a friend's house, or even a rented storage unit to remove them from your living space.

Then at a later time, when things have calmed down a bit, you can go through these items. Perhaps having a friend or family member around to help you go through these items at a later time may also be helpful.

CHANGING YOUR JOB

Unfortunately, businesses often fail to respond as employees think they should when they return to work after the death of a loved one. Too often, many grievers find returning to work difficult and contemplate quitting, finding a new job, or switching careers.

While many factors can contribute to this feeling, you should try to delay quitting your job, seeking a new employer, or changing your career for at least six months.

Again, while your grief feels freshest, you're probably not thinking normally because of your heightened, more sensitive emotional state. Therefore, once you have some time to adjust to your loss, you can re-evaluate whether an employer/career move makes the best sense for you moving forward.

MAJOR FINANCIAL CHANGES

For many people, the death of a loved one often forces the survivor to assume a host of new responsibilities, including personal or household financial matters. Widows or widowers, for instance, might not know how to balance a checkbook because their partners always handled the "money stuff." Sometimes, they might need to find a job or a higher-paying one.

The newly bereaved also have to contend with credit card accounts, loans, or insurance policies their loved one had. The same goes for investments and retirement accounts.

If it's at all possible, delay making any major and permanent financial decisions for at least six months after the death of a spouse or close family member. Consider making a reversible decision instead.

Grief can feel all-consuming and inescapable, so it's easy to understand the desire to simplify your financial situation right now. That said, you are probably not thinking clearly in the aftermath of the death. Reacting out of fear is usu-

ally not wise.

Selling your home, for example, might offer an escape from the reminders of your loved one, but remaining there might prove more financially advantageous in the long run. Likewise, keeping existing credit card accounts or an automobile with a lender lien might help you establish your creditworthiness sooner.

IF YOU HAVE TO MAKE A MAJOR DECISION

Only you know the unique circumstances you face right now following the death of your loved one. If delaying a particular life decision for six months to a year doesn't seem feasible, discuss the situation with a trusted friend or confidant.

Often, simply having a conversation with someone who has your best interest at heart can help you gain a better sense of perspective and, perhaps, help you realize that the situation is less urgent than it feels to you.

And if you're contemplating something that would affect your finances, you can likewise discuss

SEE DECISIONS PAGE 18

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WASHBURN COUNTY 2ND YEAR SENIOR FARMER'S MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM SUCCESS!

Washburn County has advocated for years to be added to the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Voucher Program. In 2023, the program reorganized, which opened the opportunity to all 72 counties in Wisconsin. Linda Featherly, County Board representative, had been one of those advocates for Washburn County residents. When offered the chance, Linda Featherly jumped right on board, along with Cassi Feiertag, an ADRC staff member, to lead the program. The first year was not as successful as anticipated, since people were not used to the ADRC offering the program. Cassi started marketing and education this year in April, which launched an immediate increase in interest from residents. Cassi also provided information to local farmers on how to become vendors and how they could make themselves more visible, by displaying their member signs at the market.

In a final year-end report from the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Division of Public Health, the statewide senior participants served increased by nearly 2,000 individuals, the program issued benefits to participants in all 72 counties, and participant redemption of checks was maintained at 74%. End-of-year reports for both 2024 and 2023 show an increase in produce purchased from local farmers from \$537,155 in 2023 to \$755,874 in 2024, a 34% increase in sales. Program-wide, WIC and Senior FMNP saw a 36% increase in produce sales to farmers this year with a total of \$1,780,642 sold in 2024 vs. \$1,232,921 sold in 2023, resulting in more fresh and local produce to participants!

Wisconsin Senior Farmers' Market Vouchers can be used at any WI participating vendors during the season. Watch the Focus in the spring for how to register as a participant or farmer. For more information: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wic/fmnp/senior.htm>

DECISIONS FROM PAGE 17

it with a trusted friend or confidant, but you should also seek the opinion of a professional financial advisor.

In addition, ask yourself if there is some way you can make a reversible decision right now. For instance, instead of selling your home because you presently find reminders of your loved one too

painful, could you live somewhere else for a while, such as a hotel, apartment, or with a friend or relative? Could you rent your home to someone temporarily?

If your job feels overwhelming, could you arrange to take a leave of absence rather than quitting? Or adjust your start/end times for a few weeks? Rather than closing financial accounts because you feel you can't deal with everything right now, could a trusted friend or

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

Healthy WashCo Prevention Programming Unit

Health & Human Services Dept., Washburn Co
715.468.4747

E: info@healthywashco.org

W: healthywashco.org

HEALTHY WASHCO OFFERS MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

Local Area is Part of a National Initiative to Increase Mental Health Literacy

Shell Lake, WI, December 5, 2024: In response to our nation's mental health crisis, Healthy WashCo and UW-Madison's Division of Extension Health & Well-Being Institute will bring Mental Health First Aid training to Washburn County in 2025. This groundbreaking skills-based course gives people the tools to identify, understand and respond to someone who might be struggling with a mental health or substance use challenge — and connect them with appropriate support and resources when necessary.

One in five Americans has a mental illness, and the pandemic has dramatically increased depression and anxiety, but many are reluctant to seek help or don't know where to turn for care. Unlike physical conditions, symptoms of mental health and substance use problems can be difficult to detect. Friends and family members may find it hard to know when and how to step in. As a result, those in need of mental health services often do not receive care until it is too late.

Just as CPR helps even those without clinical training assist an individual having a heart attack, Mental Health First Aid prepares participants to interact with a person experiencing a mental health crisis. Mental Health First Aiders learn a 5-step Action Plan that guides them through the process of reaching out and offering appropriate support.

"Never has it been more important for our communities to talk about mental health and substance use," says Chuck Ingoglia, president and CEO of the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, which helped bring Mental Health First Aid to the U.S. in 2008. "This program is breaking down barriers and stigma so that together we can learn how to better support one another. Without mental health, there is no health."

In just 12 years, Mental Health First Aid has become a full-blown movement in the United States — more than 2.5 million people are certified Mental Health First Aiders, and that number is growing every day.

Washburn County is fortunate to have a variety of instructors able to offer the entire Mental Health First Aid Suite:

- Adult—for anyone over 18 years old
- Youth—for those that work with youth (teachers, coaches, parents, etc.)
- Teen—for high school students.

Our goal is to offer at least one Mental Health First Aid training per month. Three are currently scheduled and open to anyone in the community.

- Adult Mental Health First Aid: Jan 31 and March 20

SEE **TRAINING** PAGE 20

family member help you manage them or simply handle everything outright for a few months?

Self-Care While Grieving

The most important thing you can do is take care of yourself while you're grieving. Grief is hard work and takes a genuine physical, mental, emotional and spiritual toll on our bodies, minds, and hearts.² Unfortunately, the old adage that "time heals all wounds" isn't true following the death of someone

close.

Instead, we gradually assimilate the loss of a loved one into our new lives and learn to live with the scar on our hearts, but we never truly forget the person who died. For now, trust that you will eventually reach that state, and try to avoid making any major life decisions in haste while your grief feels freshest.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR OLDER ADULTS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

CREATE A NETWORK OF SUPPORT to help in case of an emergency.

- Plan how you will communicate if you have a communication disability.
- Plan for your transportation if you need help evacuating.
- Plan how you will evacuate with any assistive devices.

PREPARE FOR A POWER OUTAGE if you use electric medical devices.

- Talk to a health care provider about what to do.
- Identify an alternative power source for devices.
- Inform your emergency contacts of the plan.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN AN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS KIT:

- Contact information for important people and care providers.
- A list of medicines you need, dosage instructions, and any allergies.
- Need-to-know information for first responders and others who might need to help you.
- Food, water, and essentials for you and pets or service animals.
- Medicines, medical supplies, batteries, and chargers.
- Copies of Medicaid, Medicare, and other insurance cards.

LEARN MORE: acl.gov/programs/emergency-preparedness.


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TRAINING FROM PAGE 18

• Youth Mental Health First Aid: Feb 21.
 As one of our local instructors likes to say, if you breath, Mental Health First Aid is for you. If you are interested in participating or bringing this important training to your community organization or business, please contact Julie Bever at jbever@co.washburn.wi.us.

For more information or to participate in a Mental Health First Aid training in Washburn County visit <https://linktr.ee/healthywashco> or contact Healthy WashCo at 715.468.4747.
 The National Council for Mental Wellbeing was instrumental in bringing Mental Health First Aid to the United States. To learn more about Mental Health First Aid USA, visit MHFA.org.

LOCAL CONTACT:
 Julie Bever, Prevention Specialist
 Youth Development & Prevention Team
 Health & Human Services Dept.,
 Washburn Co
 715.645.9032
info@healthywashco.org
jbever@co.washburn.wi.us

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