

# IMPACT



Nez Perce County Extension, 1239 Idaho Street, Lewiston, Idaho 83501; 208-799-3096; Fax: 208-799-3054

## Extension Addresses Critical Issues for Elders

### *The Situation*

While the numbers of older adults throughout the western region of the United States are greater in urban communities, the proportions of elderly are greater in rural counties. This aging population trend will have many financial and social implications in rural communities including those of north central Idaho.

The number of older adults in the north central Idaho area has increased significantly in recent years. The U.S. Bureau of Census reports 11.3% of Idahoans as age 65 or older in 2000. With the exception of Latah County at 9.5%, Nez Perce, Clearwater, Idaho, and Lewis counties reported considerably higher percentages (ranging from 15.6% to 18.5%) of Idahoans in this age range. In fact, Lewis County is one of the top three counties in the state with the highest proportion of people 65 and older. This increase suggests there will be a higher demand for services from basic needs of food and shelter to less tangible things that add meaning and satisfaction to life.

### *Our Response*

To provide older adults with information and resources to help them make decisions and plans concerning quality of life issues, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Educators in Nez Perce and Idaho counties began offering ElderFriendly Community Programming for legal and financial health and family well-being.

#### **Legal Health**

*Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate?*

*Transferring Non-titled Property* is a workshop that

provides a step-by-step guide to passing on personal possessions. It is designed to be an effective tool for a variety of family groups working to make decisions in different situations.

*Legal Checkup* is a workbook-based seminar that allows participants, in the privacy of their own homes, to review their legal affairs and identify hidden legal problems that could lead to more serious situations if left unaddressed. Participants then attend a group presentation led by UI College of Law Professor Elizabeth Brandt to develop a personal plan of things to do in order to be "legally fit." Extension partnered with American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) by adapting their Legal Checkup workbook to reflect Idaho's programs and laws.

#### **Financial Health**

*Long Term Care: Planning for Quality of Life* is a workshop designed to help participants understand the need to plan for financial security for their later life stage. Because changes in health and independence can put an individual and family at risk, participants are given information to help them identify ways to manage the risk and to evaluate if they are on the best route to protecting their financial security against the risk of long term care. This workshop is a collaborative effort with AARP Idaho and regional professionals from the Idaho Department of Insurance, Area II Agency on Aging, and Idaho Legal Aide Services.

*Identity Theft: Are You a Target?* is a workshop that helps participants gain an understanding of what identity theft is, how to reduce the risk, and what to do if they become an identity theft victim.

## **Family Well-being**

*Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Get Together* is a support group facilitated in partnership with the Area II Agency on Aging. Research shows that the grandparents and other relative caregivers who are connected to others in similar situations do better, and the children in their care are more likely to thrive. The Nez Perce County Extension office was awarded \$750.00 from the Idaho KinCare Coalition to support activities that foster close family relationships among grandchildren and the grandparents who raise them.

## ***Program Outcomes***

From spring 2003 to spring 2004, 355 participants attended thirteen ElderFriendly Community workshops in Nez Perce, Idaho, Lewis, and Latah counties. Evaluation surveys show high percentages of respondents plan to make changes as a result of information gained from speakers and resources at workshop presentations:

### **Legal Checkup**

- 86% plan to draft/revise their living will and durable power of attorney.
- 71% plan to draft/revise their will and/or trust and review their insurance policies.

### **Long Term Care**

- 88% plan to review the information they received and discuss it with a family member or friend.
- 46% intend to develop a plan for long-term health care needs and to review their financial assets to determine how they will pay for long-term care.

### **Identity Theft**

- 82% will regularly obtain their credit report and check it.
- 92% will be careful to whom they give personal/financial information.
- 87% will limit identification and number of credit cards they carry.

## **The Future**

Workshops offered in 2005 will be marketed well in advance with two seasonal brochures listing and describing programs for spring and fall.

A new workshop titled *Home Safety: Fall and Fire Prevention* is being developed and will be offered in 2005.

## ***For More Information***

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