

“Community Conversations” on Aging in Davie County

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At the 48th Davie Chamber of Commerce annual banquet held February 20, county manager John Eller shared the newly developed vision of the county’s leadership in a brief presentation. The takeaway was that not only does the county want to sustain Davie as a great place in which to grow up and enjoy a thriving career, but also as a great place in which to age and enjoy the latter years of life. In 2018, with the aging of the Baby Boomer population, Davie County is in a position similar to the majority of the counties in the state, where the number of people age 60 and better (estimated 11,868) is larger than the number of people age 17 and younger (estimated 8,613) – according to this year’s population demographics published by the NC State of Office and Budget Management. The good news is that the retiring Baby Boomers are one of the wealthiest generations in the history of the world, so an expanding population of older adults supports the county’s vision of sustainable growth and enrichment for all ages.

One example of how the Davie County government supports its aging population is the Aging Services Planning Committee (DCASPC), which is a group of community volunteers appointed by the Board of County Commissioners to serve three-year terms on the committee. One of the primary roles of the committee is to oversee slightly more than \$357,000 in federal and state funding awarded to three agencies providing services to adults age 60 and better: Davie County Senior Services, Yadkin Valley Economic Development District, Inc. (YVEDDI), and the Davie County Health Department. Another role is to serve as an information clearinghouse for public, private, and non-profit entities that provide services to older adults, those with disabilities, and their caregivers. The committee is also tasked to develop a multi-year strategic plan for supporting the needs of older adults and presenting it to the County Commissioners for review and approval.

In an effort to broaden the scope of a new strategic aging plan, the committee is hosting a “Community Conversations” meeting May 17, 10:00 am at the Davie County Public Library. At this meeting, our funded providers will give an overview of their services and the impact they are making with supportive services for older adults. The committee will lead a series of “Conversation Starters” to guide discussion about the strengths of current services and opportunities for improvement. One goal is to bring together a diversity of stakeholders who recognize the importance of maintaining vibrant outlets for service and enrichment for older adults and their caregivers. A second goal is to stabilize the network of businesses and agencies providing services for the aging and provide a regular forum for proactive planning. A third goal is to enlist new voting members for the Davie County Aging Services Planning Committee.

The month of May is designated as national Older Americans Month. This year's theme, "Engage at Every Age," emphasizes the importance of being active and involved, no matter where or when you are in life. You are never too old (or too young) to participate in activities that enrich our community and take part in the task of developing a robust strategic aging plan. If you have an interest in learning more about existing services and having a voice in planning for our growing population of older adults, please attend the "Community Conversations" meeting May 17. If you are a business providing services that enable older adults to age in place, from lawn care and home maintenance to caregiving and skilled nursing care, you have a stake in attending this meeting. By joining this group, you have an opportunity to make a positive impact on the future of our county and its older adults. Join us to set a course that ensures that Davie is not only a great place to grow up, but also a great place to age with dignity, enrichment, and independence.

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