

# Edwardsville Township announces senior services network

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EDWARDSVILLE - Supervisor Frank Miles announced Sunday Edwardsville Township's Senior Services Network to connect seniors in the Edwardsville/Glen Carbon community with information and resources. The Township held a Kick-Off Rally at the Main Street Community Center.

The Senior Services Network will link older adults in Edwardsville Township with available resources and services to meet their unique needs. The Network seeks to improve access to nutritious food, transportation options, health and safety, access to appropriate and affordable housing, as well as the ability of the senior community to be active, productive, and experience social interaction.

“The vision of the Senior Services Network is to make Edwardsville Township the best place to age with dignity. We will achieve this by serving as a lead advocate for older adults residing in Edwardsville and Glen carbon, with a specific focus on those who are hard to reach or underrepresented,” said Supervisor Miles.

The Senior Services Network will serve as a connecting agent between the Township’s senior citizens and available services and resources. By establishing ‘benefit connection centers’, trained staff and volunteers will be able to connect senior citizens and their family members with a variety of available organizations and resources at the local, state, and federal levels.

“As federal funding for programs, like Meals on Wheels, that assist seniors face extreme cuts in the recently proposed federal budget, we must develop a resource network locally that is focused on the needs of our seniors,” Supervisor Miles said.

Beth Zurliene, volunteer with Edwardsville Township and owner of Care Management Professionals provided data on the expected increase of the senior population, which emphasizes the need for access to services.

“Every day, 10,000 people turn 65 years old nationwide. Nationally, the 65 and older population will increase from 13% of the population to 20% of the population. Here in Madison County, the 65 and older population currently is 18% of our population, about 48,000 people, which is higher than the national percentage.

Complicating this shift in population, we face a caregiver shortage. Families are living separated from each other and seniors are choosing to age in place,” said Zurliene.

“Further complicating the situation, seniors have not planned to live this long and are not financially capable of caring for themselves.”

“For seniors to age in place, access to programs and assistance is key as services are fragmented at the local, state, and federal level. The Senior Services Network will provide this access for information and program needed to assist seniors and family access the services they need,” Zurliene said.

The Edwardsville/Glen Carbon area has been identified by the AgeSmart, the southwestern Area Agency on Aging, as being deficient in services for seniors. Services are readily available in Alton and Collinsville, but access is limited in Edwardsville and Glen Carbon.

“We’ve expanded our Community Outreach to provide information and assistance to programs such energy assistance and license plate discounts, but we’ve also been able to offer counseling on Medicare as a certified Senior Health Insurance Program provider,” said Supervisor Miles.

Next for the Senior Services Network will be a forum on April 12 at 2:30pm at Main Street Community Center, located at 1003 N Main Street in Edwardsville. Agencies that provide services to seniors within Edwardsville and Glen Carbon are invited to attend.

The Senior Services Network is an extension of the Township’s Social Service Safety Net. In June of 2015, Edwardsville Township, in partnership with the Glen Ed Ministerial Alliance, held a Social Services Safety Net Forum to bring together area social service agencies, organizations, and churches that provide services to residents of Edwardsville Community School District 7. The Edwardsville Township and Glen Ed Ministerial Alliance invited local agencies to reconvene in November 2016 to discuss how far we have come and where the Social Services Safety Net can expand. Edwardsville Township offers two assistance programs to residents, General Assistance and Emergency Assistance. These program assist residents with little to no income with shelter, utilities, food, and personal items.

Edwardsville Township is comprised of the City of Edwardsville, Village of Glen Carbon and unincorporated areas just outside of these two municipalities. The Township Supervisor’s office is located at 300 West Park in Edwardsville and is open from 8:30 a. m. to 4:30 p.m. on Monday and Friday and from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Learn more about Edwardsville Township online at [www.edwardsvilletownship.com](http://www.edwardsvilletownship.com) or contact the Township Offices by phone at 618-656-0292.