

Madison County implements Triad program to aid seniors

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – The Madison County Sheriff's Office has joined with several counties across the nation to create a Triad program to assist area seniors.

The program, which will be constantly updated through social media as well as its website, will keep people in Madison County alert to real-time issues targeting seniors –

such as scammers and burglaries. Lieutenant Kristopher Tharp, who has been working with county officials and senior services providers throughout the county to initiate this program, said the program has been in the works for more than a year. He said the facts more than 41,000 people in Madison County are older than 65 and as many as 12,000 live alone make this program essential.

Madison County's Triad program was officially launched Wednesday morning at a 9 a. m. press conference at the Madison County Sheriff's Office. Madison County Public Health Director Toni Corona read a proclamation at that conference, which was signed by Tharp, Corona, Madison County Sheriff John Lakin, Madison County States Attorney Tom Gibbons and around a dozen community stakeholders from aging advocacy groups, which have worked with the sheriff's office to create the Triad program.

Nationwide, Triads programs work with sheriffs offices to help alleviate the fears of crime and actual victimization elderly people go through. Tharp described Madison County as a “wonderful place to live,” but added working with senior organizations and law enforcement to create a real-time threat assessment would continue making it better.

“When you hear of senior citizens becoming victims, it just sort of churns your stomach,” Lakin said. “We're getting to the season now of home improvement scammers and we would like to limit the victimization of seniors.”

Scammers such as people offering to pave driveways door-to-door and those trying to make quick dishonest bucks following spring storms, which are currently in season across the Riverbend. On the Facebook, Twitter and website, Tharp said such scammers will be detailed as police receive information.

“Now seniors have a new medium to find out about things,” Tharp said. “They don't have to hear about it from a third-party source a few days later when the scammer has already taken advantage of their neighborhood and left.”

Ultimately, Tharp and Lakin agree the program's main targets are seniors who are elderly, lonely, vulnerable and may have difficulty leaving their homes. Those people may not have access to computers or mobile devices as other people do.

To get more face-to-face time with area seniors, Tharp said the Madison County Triads program will host informational sessions across the counties at different times to better serve an all-encompassing slice of residents.

The first of these sessions will be on April 21, 2018, at Senior Services Plus in Alton from 10 a.m. - noon. This will be a shredding day where seniors can bring anything they

need shredded. Tharp said people will be limited to three bags worth of shred-worthy material. It will simultaneously be occurring at the sheriffs office, located at 405 Randle Street in Edwardsville.

A second event presenting the Triad program to residents and helping them with severe weather safety will take place on Wednesday, May 16, 2018, at the Main Street Community Center, located at 1003 Main Street in Edwardsville at 10 a.m. That same presentation will be given at 10 a.m. on Wednesday May 23, 2018, at Senior Services Plus, located at 2603 N. Rodgers Avenue in Alton.

More information can be found on the Madison County Triad Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Madison-County-TRIAD-1594772727285206/> or website: <http://www.co.madison.il.us/departments/sheriff/sheriffElder/index.php>

Tharp said the website and Facebook page would be ever-evolving, describing them as “living entities” to collect information and send it to Madison County seniors with real-time efficiency.