

SENIOR

C2 THE SHERIDAN PRESS

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2016

Reduced funding challenging senior services

FROM THE SHERIDAN SENIOR CENTER

SHERIDAN — A recent article in the Casper Star-Tribune reported how Senior Centers across the state are being negatively impacted by the state budget cuts. Following is an interview with Carmen Rideout, executive director of the Sheridan Senior Center, on how state budget cuts are affecting the center here in our county.

Q: How have the funding cuts to senior services affected the Sheridan Senior Center?

Rideout: We have been negatively affected by the state budget cuts. The 4 percent or \$130,000 cut in what we were awarded this year will be challenging. Our fiscal year begins Oct. 1, 2016, and the board of directors is expected to approve a balanced budget at its September meeting. We operate on a very narrow margin. There is not much we are able to cut on the expense side of things because we are already very slim or efficient in how we operate, however we are definitely looking at ways to be even more efficient and ways to spend less. They are talking about even more drastic budget cuts for the 2017-2018 budget year.

Q: What challenges does reduced funding present to the

Senior Center?

Rideout: This is troubling as the demand for the community services we provide continue to increase. Our services include many opportunities to stay well through our meals that are offered every day, social activities, exercise classes, pool tournaments and volunteer experiences. We also provide many supports when people need extra help by delivering meals, providing transportation, adult day care, help with bathing, housekeeping and meal preparation.

Without these services some wouldn't be able to live at home. The average annual cost in Wyoming for the community services that Senior Centers provide is \$2,000 versus the average cost of a 24-hour skilled nursing facility at \$75,000 per year.

Investing in community services is cost effective for individuals, families, communities and the state. Our Wyoming Home Services Grant was cut by 18 percent or about \$50,000 this year. Currently we have more than 30 people on a waiting list for services funded through this state grant.

Q: What is the Senior Center doing to address increasing need for services in an environment of reduced spending for operations?

Rideout: I would love to focus mostly on increasing our revenues. Raising the fees for services is the way traditional businesses address deficits. This can be challenging to many of the people we serve who have little to no disposable income. Their monthly budget is low and fixed because they no longer work as they have in the past.

Even a small increase may mean they cannot pay a bill and they will sacrifice health, safety and wellness to do so. Another financial dynamic older people face is that any money saved is there to last their lifetime which is uncertain, so they are very conservative in their spending, even if it is to stay healthy and well.

The opening, growth and generous community contributions to the Green Boomerang Thrift Store has been our latest endeavor to generate more income for services. Our move to Main Street was a tremendous opportunity. We will continue to develop this mission driven store.

We are also working to grow our Loving Legacy Endowment by educating people on how endowments work and how a planned gift can be made. We have an



COURTESY PHOTO

Haley Roberts stands in the display window of the Senior Center's Green Boomerang thrift shop. The thrift shop helps generate revenue for the center.

ambitious goal of \$10 million by 2025. This would help us get through tough years and allow us to be less dependent on government dollars.

Q: What can the community do to support services to

seniors in Sheridan County?

Rideout: I have provided some suggestions in my Center Stage column on this page. Please take a moment to read and to consider helping the Senior Center in one of these ways.

www.thesheridanpress.com

 Sheridan Senior Center
"Celebrating 40 Years of Service!"

www.sheridanseniorcenter.org
Fun and Food
BUILD YOUR OWN SALAD MON-FRI

Entrees and kiosk include sides, dessert and drink.

Entrée Choice* or Soup Kiosk

Sun -	Country Ribs	
Mon -	Parmesan Chicken	Cream of Cauliflower
Tue -	Taco Salad/Chips	Zesty Bean Soup
Wed -	Chicken Pot Pie	Chinese Beef Soup
Thu -	Fish Florentine	Old Fashion Chicken Noodle
Fri -	Pork Wings	Mинestrone
Sat -	Baked Potato Bar w/ Ham & Cheese Sauce or Chili	

*entrée only offered for Home Delivered Meals

Mon -	B.A.M.	9:30 a.m.	Community Room
Tue -	Bluegrass & \$2 Burgers	7 p.m. to 9 p.m.	Dining Room
Wed -	3rd Wed Open Mic	11:00 a.m.	Dining Room
Fri -	Chicken Foot Dominoes	9:30 a.m.	Dining Room
Sat -	"Made In Front of You Omelet" Breakfast	7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.	

Lunch Service Hours: 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.,

7 days a week

211 Smith Street Sheridan, WY 82801 (307) 672-6079

Senior Center Main Phone: (307) 672-2240

REDISCOVER LIFE

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A photograph of an elderly man and woman smiling and throwing fallen autumn leaves in the air. They are wearing light-colored cable-knit sweaters. The background is a blurred autumn landscape with yellow leaves.

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How do we increase our income and continue to serve those most in need. Our grants and funding sources are such that we only get what we spend and there is little opportunity for growth. Our customers make payments and contributions to the cost of their services however many are on a fixed and limited income. How can Sheridan continue to support the center as the vibrant hub of service for older people and their families?

Yes — we too have been

negatively affected by the state budget cuts. Grant awards from state and local sources are 4 percent or \$130,000 less than what we were awarded this year. This will be challenging. We operate on a very narrow margin. There is not much we can cut on the expenses side of things without cutting back on services.

Yes — there is a lot hap-

pening. As you know we are

open every day of the year

and we are truly serving

older adults and families of

multiple generations. The

demand for our services is

growing and there are many

opportunities for develop-

ment of existing and new

services.

Yes — we have had tre-

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community throughout our

Celebrating Generations

and Building Community

Campaign. The \$9.5M raised

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