



# The Senior Advocate

Volume 8, Issue 1

Spring 2011

## Want to Get Involved?

### Join one of these groups:

**AARP Forsyth Chapter**  
Meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 12 at Senior Services. Call Beverly 922-4239

**Senior Power Think Tank**  
Meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 10 (location varies) Call Vicki 703-3883

**Citizen Advisory Committees** at state, county & city levels have need for members. Find out more by calling:  
City Link: 336-727-8000  
County Commissioners: 336-703-2020  
NC Governor's Office: 919-715-4239

Write letters to the editor of the newspaper and articles for other publications. Your personal story IS important!

## Spring Into Action! Voicing Your Concern on Issues That Matter

If you listen to the news, many of the things you hear have to do with the poor economy, lack of jobs, and budget shortfalls at all levels of government. It was only a matter of time before these governmental money woes started to affect individuals in our county. Over the past few weeks, we've seen different versions of the state budget and heard various rumors about which services will be cut and which will be spared.

While the powers that be look at what to cut and what to keep, we as individuals and collectively as the mature Forsyth County residents, should consider what we can live without and what we must fight to keep. Is adult day care a priority? What about volunteer programs? Transportation? What are your needs and the needs of your neighbor? Where do your passions lie?

However, its not enough to simply weigh the issues and options and form an opinion. We all must take that next step.....ACTION. What does action look like? Action is educating yourself and others on the issues and what changes need to take place. Action is contacting YOUR legislators; those who represent your voice in government. Action is attending events and meetings in support of causes that are important to you. Action is finding ways to help stand in the gap when and where necessary. Action is writing letters to the newspapers. Action is recruiting others of all ages to join in the fight.

Our goal in this issue of THE SENIOR ADVOCATE is to give you some of the tools you need to be an aging advocate. So dig in and spring into action!

## What Are North Carolina Adults 50+ Thinking?

AARP NC polled 800 North Carolinians aged 50+ in mid-December to see what they're thoughts were about potential legislative issues in our state. Key findings include:

Half (51%) feel the governor and state legislators should **balance the state budget by finding new ways to raise money without cutting state services**. Slightly less than one third (30%) feel the state needs to cut state services and find new ways to raise money in order to balance the state budget.

Nearly six in ten (57%) would **support the state providing additional funding for home and community based services even if it meant an increase in taxes**. Most (87%) support the state providing family caregivers with a tax break.

Over two-thirds (69%) **support the state increasing the Homestead Exemption income eligibility level** for seniors & disabled homeowners from \$25,000 to \$30,000 even if they would not be eligible for the exemption.

The majority (77%) **oppose a ruling by the US Supreme Court that allows corporations and unions to spend as much money as they want to help political candidates win elections**.

## So What ARE The Issues?



What issues should be of concern to older adults in Forsyth County, North Carolina? Below is a compilation of items obtained from sources such as AARP, Senior Tarheel Legislature, meetings of local agencies, and information obtained from those working in the aging field.

- Establishment of a family caregiver tax credit for expenses incurred in caring for an older or disabled family member at home
- Continued funding for the Home and Community Care Block Grant, which supports in-home and community-based services for older adults.
- Funding of Adult Day Care programs for adults 60+. These programs allow family caregivers the ability to remain in the workforce, keeping their families economically stable. As of this writing, the social services block grant is losing this funding.
- Continue current funding for project C.A.R.E. (Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empty), which provides respite care and support to caregivers of persons with Alzheimer's.
- Preservation of Medicaid eligibility and services for older and disabled adults.
- Maintain existing funding for certified senior centers
- Support for non-profit organizations that provide needed services to our community
- Support transportation options and planning efforts that create more livable communities for all ages.
- Funding for volunteer development programming for older adults. These programs keep older adults engaged and many of the volunteers in these programs serve frail older adults by providing services such as meals-on-wheels delivery and transportation to appointments and shopping. As of this writing, funding for these programs is slated for elimination.
- Addressing work force shortages—because of the rapid increase in the older adult population, we are facing shortages of workers to take care of us as we age. This includes: nurses, doctors, social workers, pharmacists, physical therapists and other health care workers.
- Help the aging stay in their homes and avoid more costly care in rest homes, nursing homes, or hospital emergency rooms. While the state has been moving in this direction, the rapid population growth means we need to speed up development of programs that help the aging stay in their homes and evaluate the results of these programs to see what works well for seniors.



### Points to Remember When Approaching Your Elected Official

- Be concise (3-4 talking points)
- Limit oral presentation to 5-10 minutes
- Be prepared—know your subject & the official.
- Try to anticipate questions
- Be polite
- Be specific (what do you want him/her to do?)
- Don't be intimidated
- Don't threaten or become defensive
- Leave behind a 1 page summary (fact sheet)
- Follow up a visit with a letter (thank you note)
- Work with the staff (they have the official's ear!)
- Know the concerns of the opposition
- Don't pretend to know all the answers
- Put a face on the issue (make it real to them)



## Winston-Salem Transit Authority Offers Try Transit Program

The Try Transit Program is a free assistance program to help people learn to use and become more comfortable with public transportation. Travel training can be conducted from the community where a rider lives or they can come downtown to the bus station. A travel trainer accompanies a customer on a bus ride during which the rider is shown how to identify the bus they need to catch, how to use bus passes, properly utilize the fare

box and how to request a stop. For more information, call WSTA at (336) 727-2001.

Did you know that WSTA offers half-fare bus service to individuals with disabilities? Individuals must submit an application. Upon approval you will receive a half-fare card that you present each time you board a WSTA bus. Call or stop by the bus station at 100 W. Fifth St. for information or to obtain an application.



## Test Drive an E-Reader at Your Local Library!



In the past several months the popularity of e-readers has exploded onto the marketplace. What's an eReader? In a nutshell it's a small, lightweight, handheld device (roughly the width and length of a small hardback book) that can store anywhere from a couple of hundred books to over 1,000. Their lightweight, compact design allows you to enjoy your favorite books almost anywhere you go.

The Library now offers two different brands of eReaders you can check out, take home and try out for yourself. All ten library locations will each have a Barnes & Noble Nook and a Sony Reader available for check-out. Each eReader comes fully charged and preloaded with a variety of adult, teen and juvenile books. The loan period will be seven days and cannot be renewed. Our primary goal is to give our customers an opportunity to become familiar with different types of devices to help you determine if an eReader fits your lifestyle.

For more information about our eReader policy, including overdue fines and restrictions, please contact your local library branch or call the main library at: 336-703-2665



## Where to find more information on aging related issues

**AARP North Carolina** [www.aarp.org/nc](http://www.aarp.org/nc) 866-389-5650 (toll free)

**Area Agency on Aging** [www.nwpcog.gov](http://www.nwpcog.gov) 336-761-2111

**NC Division of Aging** [www.ncdhhs.gov/aging](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/aging) 919-733-0443

**Forsyth County Aging Services Planning Committee** <http://forsythaging.forsyth.cc> 336-703-3883

**NC Senior Tar Heel Legislature** [www.ncdhhs.gov/aging/sthl](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/aging/sthl) 336-265-2215 (Nancy Hall, local delegate)

### RISKS

"We attribute to old age wisdom and sagacity and all these good things, but we don't have much use for that in our get-up-and-go culture...We've become a security-obsessed culture. We're an air-bag culture. We buy cars because of their safety features. Everything has to be safety-proofed so that there can be no accident...It's as if, psychically, we live in gated communities in order to keep out the unforeseen...Where has the risk gone? Aging is a time of risk, and older people have incredible courage. Just the way they cross the street. Just facing life with a more vulnerable constitution. Just going downstairs or getting out of the bathtub. Risks. Courage."

—James Hillman, interviewed in "The Sun"

## Senior Power Think Tank

A subcommittee of:  
 Forsyth County Aging Services  
 Planning Committee  
 741 North Highland Avenue  
 Winston-Salem, NC 27101  
 Phone: 336-703-3883  
 E-mail: forsythagings@forsyth.cc  
 Web: forsythagings.forsyth.cc

**Working Together to  
 Make Forsyth County  
 Senior Friendly**



## Thoughts from the New Older Guy in Town. . .

WHAT IS A SENIOR?

When did I become a senior?

When I reached a certain age?

When I became eligible for social security or special programs?

When the government told me I was old?

When I could get a discount on my coffee at a fast food restaurant?

Maybe it was when my kids told me to slow down...take it easy...don't push yourself

Maybe it's all in my mind (or someone else's mind).

I feel fine, I don't feel old.

What does being a senior feel like?

I still do the same things I did before I became a senior (maybe not as fast but I still do them).

I enjoy walking even though I don't run like those YOUNG non seniors do.

I enjoy my grandkids as much as I enjoyed my children when they were REALLY young.

I can rake leaves and I could shovel snow—if there was enough to shovel (this IS North Carolina)

Am I senior or am I old??

—Phil Poore

## Legislative Contacts for Forsyth County

State Legislators	District #	Office #	Email
Senator Pete Brunstetter	336-747-6604	919-733-7850	Peter.Brunstetter@ncleg.net
Senator Linda Garrou	336-922-4192	919-733-5620	Linda.Garrou@ncleg.net
Rep. Larry Brown	336-996-4099	919-733-5607	Larry.Brown@ncleg.net
Rep. Dale Folwell	336-748-0046	919-733-5787	Dale.Folwell@ncleg.net
Rep. Bill McGee	336-766-4181	919-733-5747	William.McGee@ncleg.net
Rep. Earline Parmon	336-767-7395	919-733-5829	Earline.Parmon@ncleg.net
Rep. Larry Womble	336-767-7395	919-733-5777	Larry.Womble@ncleg.net
US Legislators	District #	Office #	Email
Senator Richard Burr	336 631-5125	202-224-3154	Use burr.senate.gov website
Senator Kay Hagan	336-333-5311	202-224-6342	Use hagan.senate.gov website
Representative Virginia Foxx	336- 778-0211	202-225-2071	Use foxx.house.gov website
Representative Mel Watt	336-275-9950	202-225-1510	Use watt.house.gov website