

Encore

AN UPDATE FOR OUR OLDER ADULT RESIDENTS
SUMMER 2024

Hello Neighbors,

We are in the midst of the magnificent days of summer, in a place that's hard to match in its splendor, and I hope you are taking full advantage of everything Oakland County and Michigan have to offer.

There are Farmer's Markets to purchase fresh produce and the lakes and parks to explore. If you are looking for entertainment, we've got that, too, with our myriad concerts and recreational activities. The choices seem endless at this time of year.

And there are ways that Oakland County can help you savor the season.

- With the expansion of routes and hours across the county, local transportation providers can get you where you want to go with a little advanced notice. Go to Oakland County's Transit website - oakgov.com/community/oakland-transit or call 248-975-9876 - find out how to book a ride.
- The county gives free passes for entry into Oakland County Parks for recreational activities and other programming for residents 62 and older. Go to [oakgov.com/parks](#) for more information.
- Our commitment to senior centers across Oakland County includes helping improve facilities and services offered on site.
- Need some chores done at your house? We've teamed up with the Oakland Livingston Human Services Agency to provide grants to communities to set up programs to help older residents with household tasks. Stay tuned for more information on this essential program.
- Check in with our Older Adult Services office to find out about all the resources Oakland County and other agencies provide residents. You can reach them at (248) 858-2110.

In this and future newsletters, you can learn more about what makes Oakland County such an amazing place to call home.

With gratitude,



Oakland County Executive
David Coulter



All ways, MOVING FORWARD

Senior Market FRESH



A balanced diet is important at any age, but especially for older adults and that is why Oakland County encourages healthy eating and offers programs on the topic for its residents. The Oakland County Health Division supports and serves the older adult population through a variety of programs, including the Senior Market Fresh program which provides older adults with Michigan-grown products at registered farmers markets.

About 10 percent of older people living in their homes do not eat enough and one-third of people over the age 65 are consuming too many calories, according to HealthinAging.org. The program, which also educates older adults about health, nutrition, and food access, runs from May 1 to Oct. 31.

Qualifying older adults will receive \$25 in vouchers to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets. To qualify, an Oakland County resident must:

- Be 60 or older;
- Be income eligible, based on federal guidelines
- Live in the county where coupons are dispensed.
- Attend a class or one-on-one instruction on healthy eating.

For more information on Senior Market Days in Oakland County, contact Robin Danto at (248) 215-6307 or dantor@oakgov.com.



Older Adult Discount for Dogs

The Oakland County Animal Shelter & Pet Adoption Center gives a discount on dog licenses to older adults. The discount depends on whether the resident is buying a one- or three-year license.

OakGov.com/pet-adoption

How I became a Family Caregiver



Eli Cooper is Oakland County's first manager of the Transit Division of the Economic Development Department and the primary caregiver for his wife, **Susan**.

Some people have loved ones cared for by paid, professional caregivers at independent or assisted living communities. This works for many families.

Others, like me, strive to provide care for their loved ones at home' joining more than 1 in 5 Americans providing support for a family member or friend, according to AARP and the National Alliance for Caregiving.

Caregiving came to me following my wife's early onset Alzheimer's diagnosis 10 years ago. The medical and social work staff helped my transition from just being a part of a family to being granted

the title of caregiver. I was prepared with their recommendations, including lists of books to read and issues to address, such as medical and durable power of attorney.

Are you familiar with these forms? Are yours up to date? Ours weren't, but as a caregiver it becomes a necessity. Small tasks such as ordering medication or prescription refill for someone else isn't easy without the proper credentials.

I decided early on to provide the level of comfort and care for my wife that I would have wanted, had I received the diagnosis. That decision was easy. We all want to do the best for our loved ones. I had no idea how challenging the road ahead was going to be.

Caregiving by the Numbers

74.5%

Percentage of Michigan adults 50+ who provided care to a friend or family member for six months or more

15.9%

Percentage of Michigan adults 50+ who expect to provide care for someone with health problems in the next two years

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Population Health. Healthy Aging Data [online]. [accessed May 17, 2024]. URL: <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/agingdata/index.html>.

“ There are only four kinds of people in the world — those who have been caregivers, those who are caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need caregivers.

Rosalyn Carter, former First Lady ”

Caregiving means learning many new skills, having to manage a household, as well as meeting medical appointments and coping with continuously changing medical conditions.

Being a caregiver can be stressful and we need to be vigilant regarding the stress that comes with it. A caregiver spends their time and energy providing for their loved ones, often ahead of their own needs. As a result, many encounter serious issues with their mental and physical health.

My call to action for those reading this: If you are a caregiver, it is imperative you take care of yourself. If you know someone in a caregiving situation, offer to help. Even offering relief for an hour or two can be significant for a caregiver who may not have had such a break for years. Another great resource for caregivers is AgeWays Nonprofit Senior Services, formerly the Area Agency on Aging 1-B, which can connect you with:

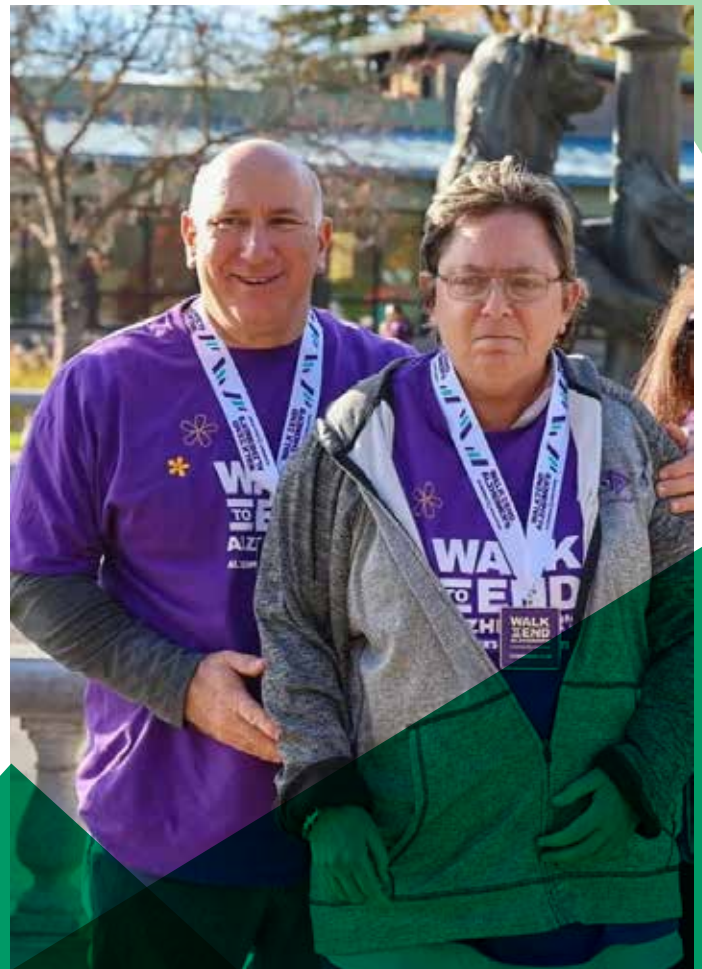
- Respite care
- Meals on Wheels
- Caregiving classes

Call them at (800) 852-7795 or visit ageways.org for more information.

Veterans and their families also have their own resources for respite care. Oakland County Veterans' Services helps former military members and their families navigate the VA and advocate for the benefits they deserve. Visit OakGov.com/

Veterans or email veterans-services@oakgov.com to be connected to a veterans' benefits counselor.

If you would like to know more, reach out to me at Ecooper45@hotmail.com. I am willing to not only be present for my wife but to help others address such challenges.



Spotlight On: South Lyon Active Adult Center

The improved and expanded South Lyon Center for Active Adults (CAA) provides older adults with a place to call home, stay fit and expand their talents

Located in South Lyon High School, at the corner of North Lafayette Street (Pontiac Trail) and Eleven Mile Road, the CAA is one of 29 Oakland County senior centers that benefited from the \$5 million in grants from the county's American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds in 2023. The funding allowed the South Lyon CAA to build an outdoor pavilion area and expand their programming.

The recent improvements support a wide array of programs: swimming, a walking club, pickleball, knitting, painting and wood carving classes and a book club. The center also offers a signature yoga class called Kaiut, which work the joints instead of stretching the muscles.

Some of the improvements were targeted at outdated elements within the center.

"We were able to replace our 25-year-old carpet with new vinyl floors, and purchase new lounge chairs for more comfort," said Carrie Cavanaugh, director of the CAA.

She said the mission of the center is "to encourage the art of living well by building a vibrant community of active individuals, 50 and up, through diverse programming and activities."

"Our center is a place of comfort. Where you can come and meet new people," said Suzanne one of the more than 4,400 members of the South Lyon CAA. "I have met some great people and built amazing friendships."

Oakland County is committed to serving the county's older adult population with services and resources. That includes providing support to some senior centers that provide a network of friends, as well as educational and nutritional programming that help keep older residents engaged, active and healthier both physically and mentally.



Is your local older adult center a place you can call home? Share your story with Oakland County Older Adult Services.

Contact Danisha Weathersby weathersbyd@oakgov.com, (248) 858-0593 or (248) 425-8897. It could be featured in an upcoming issue.



Facing the Squeeze

How Seniors Can Tackle Rising Property Taxes on Fixed Incomes

As inflation pressure continues on food, utilities and other items, keeping one's head above water is increasingly challenging. Seniors, particularly those on fixed incomes, often struggle to absorb the higher living costs, including paying their property taxes.

Even those who own their homes outright face challenges. Although they no longer have monthly mortgage payments, they are responsible for covering their entire property tax bill, which can range from hundreds to thousands of dollars - and may increase year to year. This, coupled with their fixed incomes and high inflation, can create an overwhelming financial burden.

Resources are available to help seniors maintain their homes, avoid property tax foreclosure and enjoy a more secure retirement. Oakland County residents and business owners can access confidential financial planning and counseling services through the Oakland County Treasurer's Office Financial Empowerment Center. This resource provides confidential guidance and support to address financial challenges with personalized strategies.

"Our unwavering commitment is to prevent property tax foreclosure and provide assistance," said Oakland County Treasurer Robert Wittenberg.

"We are dedicated to working with our residents and business owners to help them retain their property."

Robert Wittenberg
Oakland County Treasurer

In addition to seeking assistance from the Financial Empowerment Center, seniors can take several proactive steps to manage their property taxes and avoid the risk of losing their homes through foreclosure, including:

- **Stay Informed:** Stay up-to-date with any changes in property tax laws, exemptions, or deferment programs that may benefit seniors.
- **Make a Plan:** Review your Notice of Assessment in February each year to understand your property tax obligation. Save money each month to prepare for the upcoming tax bill in July and December.
- **Budget Wisely:** Create a detailed budget for your living expenses and property taxes. Prioritize your expenses.
- **Explore Exemptions:** Determine if you qualify for any property tax exemptions, such as the homestead exemption or tax relief programs.

Seek Flexible Payment Options: If you have delinquent property taxes, contact the Oakland County Treasurer's Office to discuss your eligibility for a repayment plan that can help spread out the cost of property taxes.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, visit OakGov.com/Treasurer or call (248) 858-0611.



Tips to Discern Accurate Information During the Elections

As the 2024 election cycle begins, not only will it be crucial for voters to look out for misinformation and disinformation, but it will also become more difficult to do so as technology advances. For example, artificial intelligence (AI) text chatbots can draft stories on any subject and AI image generators can create realistic pictures based on user prompts. How do you know what to believe? Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

Use your common sense

Dishonest writers and social media posters try to invoke outrage in the reader to spread disinformation. If something strikes you as overly emotionally charged or shocking, pause and review. Is it a credible source, or is it a celebrity pundit? Is it providing both sides fairly, or is it trying to convince the reader? Do they show their research to back up claims? Does the writer or website stand to gain something or are they impartial?

Fact check

There are multiple fact-checking websites to help you verify what you encounter online. Make it a habit to use at least one when you read news on social media.

- **AP Fact Check:** an independent global news organization.
- **Factcheck.org:** a nonpartisan, nonprofit project created by Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania.

- **PolitiFact:** owned by the nonprofit Poynter Institute for Media Studies.
- **RumorGuard:** a nonpartisan education nonprofit created by the News Literacy Project.
- **Snopes:** founded in 1994 as an early online encyclopedia, it has grown to become a fact-checking site for news and social media

Images Aren't Always Proof

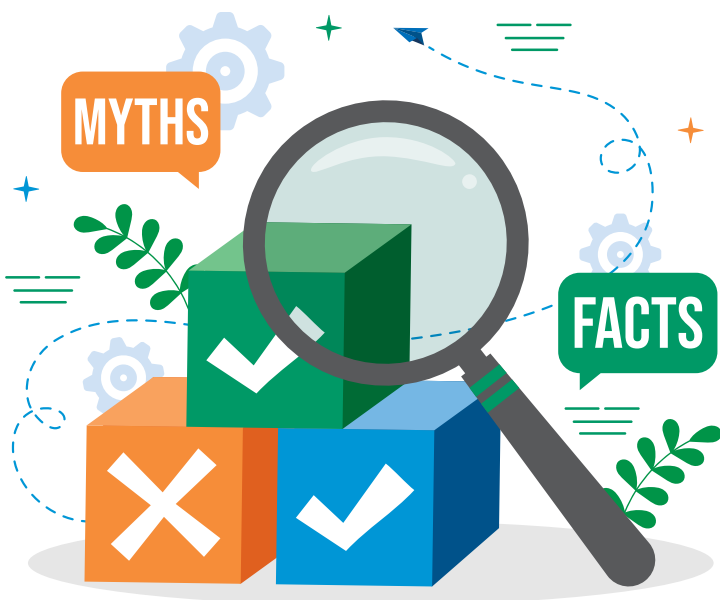
Although we like to think pictures and videos provide irrefutable truth, the fact is that cameras can lie. Through forced perspective, angles, and lighting, recordings can be manipulated. Think of the skyscraper in the 1974 film, “The Towering Inferno.” It wasn’t a life-size 138-story building but instead a 70-foot miniature. Artificial Intelligence can also create convincing videos and images, but viewers can avoid being duped by looking very closely. Extra fingers, bizarre backgrounds and distorted objects are classic giveaways. If the subject of the image or video appears airbrushed while the background is blurred, it’s most likely an AI generation.

Listen closely

Even audio snippets can be altered or created with AI. In a 2023 study, scientists found that listeners could identify phony audio only 73% of the time. So there are many opportunities for scammers to trick listeners, like swaying their vote in an election or giving away money and private information.

Beware the echo chamber

If you encounter social posts or images that only continue to reaffirm and repeat your beliefs, you may be stuck in an “echo chamber,” which can lead to misinformation. By purposefully searching for or reading counterviews, you can more easily determine your stance on specific issues.





Senior Advisory Council Advocates for Older Adults in Oakland County

The Oakland County Senior Advisory Council (SAC) is an appointed council with 21 members who represent each of the 19 county commission districts, with two members-at-large. The SAC's purpose is to:

- Inform the County Executive on older adult needs and services
- Identify gaps in the older adult network
- Collaborate with organizations and centers serving Oakland County older adults

- Increase awareness of the issues and concerns of Oakland County's older adults

Each year, the council members commit themselves to goals and strategies that help coordinate the programs, services and supportive facilities already in place to help older adults age in place. Visit oakgov.com/community/health/partnerships/older-adults/senior-advisory-council to learn more.

Welcome

Welcome to **Danisha Weathersby**, the newest addition to Older Adult Services!

She will be our communications and marketing assistant and joins **Jim Ellison**, chief of older adult services. The department that has a goal of helping older residents in Oakland County access all the resources and programs available to them. She has 10 years of experience in the public health sector, including wellness programming to promote active lifestyles and education the relationship between nutrition on chronic diseases

Previously, she worked as a public health educator with the Oakland County Health Division.

You can reach her at (248) 425-8897 or weathersbyd@oakgov.com.





Board Of Commissioners Highlights Contributions Older Adults Make in Their Communities

The Oakland County Outstanding Older Adult Award gives commissioners the opportunity to honor the small and big things older residents do to make the county a desirable place to live. For the third year, each commissioner recognized a resident who lives, works or volunteers in their district, who is older than 60 and who consistently goes above and beyond.

Recipients of the 2024 Outstanding Older Adult Award are:

- Claudia Buckley, Pontiac (presented by Commissioner Angela Powell, District 9)
- Renie and Paul Daelemans, Keego Harbor (presented by Commissioner Kristen Nelson, District 10)
- Loretta DeLoach, Lathrup Village (presented by Commissioner Yolanda Smith Charles, District 17)
- Harmen Guenther, Southfield (presented by Commissioner Linnie Taylor, District 18)
- Kip Kriigel, Oxford Township (presented by Commissioner Michael Spisz, District 5)
- Gregory Kucera, Clawson (presented by Commissioner Penny Luebs, District 2)
- David Nona, West Bloomfield (presented by Vice Chair Marcia Gershenson, District 11)
- Karen Zyczynski, Novi (presented by Commissioner Gwen Markham, District 15)

To learn more about the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, follow along on Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube, or visit OakGov.com/BOC.

FIND YOUR COMMISSIONER

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Commissioner Penny Luebs - District 2

luebsp@oakgov.com • (248) 639-8836

Commissioner Ann Erickson Gault - District 3

ericksongaulta@oakgov.com • (248) 320-5798

Commissioner Brendan Johnson - District 4

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Minority Caucus Chair Michael Spisz - District 5

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Commissioner Michael J. Gingell - District 6

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Commissioner Bob Hoffman - District 7

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Commissioner Karen Joliat - District 8

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Commissioner Angela Powell - District 9

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Commissioner Kristen Nelson - District 10

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Vice Chair Marcia Gershenson - District 11

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Commissioner Christine Long - District 12

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Commissioner Philip J. Weipert - District 13

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Commissioner Ajay Raman - District 14

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Commissioner Gwen Markham - District 15

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Commissioner William Miller - District 16

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Commissioner Yolanda Smith Charles - District 17

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Commissioner Linnie Taylor - District 18

taylorl@oakgov.com • (248) 466-2798

Commissioner Charlie Cavell - District 19

cavellc@oakgov.com • (248) 807-4347

SAVE THE DATES!

Oakland County's Healthy Oakland Partnership (HOP) is hosting three Senior Market Days this year.

Oakland County residents, 60 years and older, are eligible for a \$5 coupon to spend on produce at participating farmer's markets, simply by taking a survey. Coupon distribution ends 30 minutes before the market closes. Distribution is on a first-come, first-serve basis. Coupons are only available for Oakland County residents and must be used during the event. No registration is necessary. Below are the dates and participating farmers markets. For more information, call (248) 365-8954 or email merzk@oakgov.com.

Thursday, Aug. 29

9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Senior Expo

Jewish Community Senior Center
6600 Maple Road
West Bloomfield

Thursday, Sept. 5

8 a.m.-1 p.m.

Oakland County Farmers Market
2350 Pontiac Lake Road
Waterford

Saturday, Sept. 7

9 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Farmington Farmers Market
33113 Grand River Ave.
Farmington



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OAKLAND COUNTY EXECUTIVE
Executive Office Building
2100 Pontiac Lake Road | 41W
Waterford, MI 48328-0412

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SUMMER 2024



2350 Pontiac Lake Road
Waterford, Michigan

7 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

May-December

Tuesdays, Thursdays
and Saturdays

January-April

Saturdays only

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Board of Commissioners:

(248) 858-0100

Clerk/Register of Deeds:

(248) 858-0581

County Executive:

(248) 858-0480

Nurse on Call:

(800) 848-5533

Prosecutor:

(248) 858-0656

Sheriff:

(248) 858-5000

Treasurer:

(248) 858-0611

Water Resources Commissioner:

(248) 858-1110

AgeWays Nonprofit Senior Services:
(formerly Area Agency on Aging 1-B)

(800) 852-7795

All ways, MOVING FORWARD