

Alaskan Seniors Living Longer Growing Stronger

from the Alaska Commission on Aging



Sean Parnell
Governor

Fall 2012



William J. Streur
Commissioner

Passing the Gavel: New ACoA Leadership Takes the Helm

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) hosted a successful rural outreach meeting August 21st-23rd in Homer that included visits with agencies in Homer, Nikiski, Kenai, Anchor Point and Seldovia. Representatives from the U.S. Administration of Community Living/

Administration on Aging Region X office joined us for this meeting. They included David Ishida, Administrator, Terry Duffin, Senior Program Officer, and Jeanette Burket, Aging Services Program Specialist. Chazz Kawabori, retired administrator from the Administration

on Aging Region X office, was a guest speaker at our meeting. He provided a historical perspective highlighting the persons involved in developing senior programs in Alaska.

During this week, the Commission sponsored

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Top: Guest speaker, Chazz Kawabori, retired Administration on Aging Region X administrator, reviews the historical development of senior programs in Alaska.

Bottom: Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia Community Forum in Homer

Alaskan Seniors:
Living Longer, Growing Stronger
is a quarterly publication of the
Alaska Commission on Aging
(ACoA).

The mission of the Alaska
Commission on Aging is to advocate
for policies, programs, and
services that promote the dignity
and independence of Alaska's
seniors and help them maintain a
meaningful quality of life.

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www.AlaskaAging.org/publications.htm



Director's Corner

By Denise Daniello

Farewell and Best Wishes to Betty and Sharon

At the ACoA quarterly meeting in Homer, we had to say goodbye and thank you to two long-time commissioners, Betty Keegan and Sharon Howerton. Both have served on the ACoA board for the maximum eight years allowed by Statute. During their service time to the Commission, the State's senior population grew by 56% and the Commission developed and published two Alaska State Plans for Senior Services (FY2008-2011 and FY2012-FY2015), traveled to 36 cities and villages, successfully advocated for many legislative issues and helped to make a positive impact on just about every Alaskan senior.

Sharon Howerton was appointed by Governor Murkowski in 2004 to serve as a Commissioner on the ACoA. Sharon, who lives in Homer, drove to her first meeting in Anchorage. On the way, she stopped at every senior center on the Kenai Peninsula introducing herself as a new ACoA Commissioner and asked for information and support from each senior center. During her eight years on the Commission, she served three years as Vice-Chair and three years as Chair.

When asked about the accomplishment that she is most proud of during her service Sharon said "ACoA has a 'high- functioning team whose mission is to serve Alaskan seniors. We are respected by legislators, seniors and providers alike. We fought hard to get Senior Benefits in place after the Longevity Bonus was cancelled."

She knows that there is still more work to be done, especially for people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia (ADRD), as well as to continue work to improve the quality of life for seniors as they age and to expand Aging and Disabilities Resource Centers (ADRC) in the state. Sharon feels like this will happen with the current team in place. She is so proud that she was able to be part of the effort to improve senior life in Alaska.

Sharon mentioned that she really enjoyed working with seniors throughout the state but especially enjoyed meeting and working with people in the rural villages. Sharon will continue to be involved in senior issues, especially in the Kenai region.

Sharon was honored with a Legislative citation that she received from Representative Paul Seaton during the ACoA Homer meeting. Sharon thanks everyone for making her time on the Commission such a wonderful experience!



Left: Vice-Chair, Pat Branson, reads the “Ballad of Betty” to Commission member Betty Keegan who completed two terms. Right: Sharon Howerton, former ACoA chair, displays a Barbara Lavelle print that was presented by ACoA Commissioners and staff.

Director’s Corner
(Continued from page 2)

Sharon, we will miss you and thank you for all that you have done for Alaskan seniors.

Betty Keegan another beloved Commissioner, completed eight years of service to the ACoA. Betty, a long-time resident of Wrangell, stated that she has observed many positive changes in Alaska’s support for seniors during her tenure.

As the Commission’s articulate and soft-spoken sage, Betty

offered these parting words of wisdom. “Old age, senior status, whatever you wish to call it, is the pot of gold in the later stages of this journey we call life. Being old is the great equalizer of our gathered riches, social status, and financial successes. Gather as many true friends to accompany and assist you, the younger the better. Hoards of grandchildren too as they think you are neat. Their parents (usually our adult children) think the opposite. The golden rule to be a successful old timer is, “never, never ever admit

to aches, pains, or financial concerns. Another ultimate rule is to never utter the statement “when I was a kid...” Be a blessing daily to at least one person you encounter on your journey, and remember to give thanks daily to your Lord for your present lot in life.”

We will miss Betty for her wise advice and ability to use her experience and wisdom on behalf of the ACoA and Alaska’s seniors.

Welcoming the newest Commission member, Sandi Doyle of Fairbanks

Sandi Doyle was appointed to the Commission by Governor Parnell in February to serve in a public member seat. Sandi is a licensed practical geriatric nurse who believes that “No one should be sick, in pain and allowed to die alone without someone to care for them.” Sandi is the owner/administrator for Caring Bridges Assisted Living Home in Fairbanks, an agency that

she started in 2000. Caring Bridges is a 16-bed assisted living home that provides 24-hour level three nursing care through the end of life. Sandi is an experienced family caregiver and cared for her husband for seven years during his battle with Alzheimer’s disease. Sandi is a committed community volunteer, hospice volunteer and member of the Fairbanks Rotary. In February 2013, Sandi is planning to visit India as a Rotary member to distribute the polio vaccine to young children to help them get a jump start on a healthy life.

The Alaska Commission on Aging is excited to have Sandi on-board.



Health News

New 2012 Family Caregiver Survey of Persons with Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementia

Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia (ADRD) is a growing public health concern impacting thousands of Alaskans and their families across all cultures and regions of the State. Family caregivers often carry the responsibility of caring for family with ADRD but little is known about the challenges these Alaskans face.

This confidential survey will be used to inform development of a new State Plan for persons with Alzheimer’s disease and Related Dementia. Results from the survey will be available early 2013.

To request a survey or help ACoA identify unpaid caregivers please contact Jon Erickson EdD at the ACoA, 907-465-4792 or jon.erickson@alaska.gov or go to <https://www.research.net/s/GZF8PXS> to take the survey on-line.



Sandi Doyle and Paula Pawlowski between meetings in the Capitol



Health Logic

by
Sherice Cole

Health Tips for Healthy Aging

*Note*** Remember to always check with your health care provider before you use any supplements or start or change your health care regimen.*

Blood Sugar

Whether you have diabetes or not, keeping your blood sugar in check is an essential factor in being healthy.

How do you achieve a healthy blood sugar balance? Eat smaller portions at meal time and snack in-between meals on low carbohydrate and high protein foods such as nuts, fruit, pumpkin or chai seeds, mozzarella cheese with crackers, and other healthy foods.

Some people believe that if they have low blood sugar and are tired, eating something like a cookie or drinking a soda will give them energy. While refined sugar such as sugar cane or high fructose syrup will give you a quick boost of energy, that energy level will wear off within a few minutes. So look for a “smart snack” which is one with high protein and low in carbohydrates to provide your body with the fuel that will last longer.

Stay hydrated. Water is essential. Try a cup of green tea to improve your mental clarity, detox your system and slim down your waistline.

If you have eaten something sugary and you feel like your blood sugar is out of balance try eating a bowl of oatmeal with a pinch of cinnamon or drink a cup of apple juice. Within ten minutes, your blood sugar will be in balance again.

The less refined sugar (sugar cane) or high fructose syrup you consume the better. Sugar suppresses your immune system and your liver’s ability to purge toxins.

Instead of sugar or artificial sweeteners in your beverage, try honey.

Making healthy choices is not always easy to do, but do the best that you can by making better choices when you can and as often as you can.

Reduce stress in your life

Meditate for 5 to 10 minutes a day, a few times a week. Go to a quiet room in your home and lay down for 5 to 10 minutes. Shut your eyes and let yourself relax. Feel your muscles relax. Keep your mind focused on a relaxing scene such as walking on the beach or wading in water. Music can help you to relax. After you meditate you should feel rejuvenated and refreshed.

Another way to improve your energy level is to take a walk for at least ten minutes a couple of times a day. This will clear your mind and be helpful to your heart.



Federal Notes

What is Medicare Part D coverage? How does it work?

Medicare prescription drug coverage, known as “Part D,” is prescription drug insurance provided by private insurance companies. The plans change each year, so new information for 2013 is summarized in this article. Part D coverage is available for Alaskans in “Stand Alone” Part D plans. There are not any Medicare Advantage plans in Alaska which are also known as Medicare Health Plans plus Part D. All Part D plans sold in Alaska have been approved by Medicare.

In Alaska for 2013 there will be many “Stand Alone Plans”. Each of those plans is sold throughout the State. Each plan has a different list of covered drugs, premiums, deductibles, co-pays and pharmacy networks. Each company must offer a “Standard Plan,” but can also offer enhanced plans with additional coverage.

Who can get Part D coverage? How and when do I enroll?

If you have Medicare Part A (helps to pay for inpatient hospital care, skilled nursing care, and hospice care), Part B (helps pay for doctors' fees, outpatient hospital and other medical services and supplies not covered under Part A) or both, you are eligible to have Medicare Part D. Many people will first enroll in a Part D plan during the same period they enroll in Medicare Part A and B; three months before, the month of, and three months after their 65th birthday (7 month, Initial Enrollment Period).

Enrollment occurs when you review plans, pick one, and then call the Medicare office or enroll online to indicate which plan you have chosen.

There are additional Special Enrollment Periods for situations such as moving from one state to another, moving in or out of a nursing home, or losing employer coverage. Some people have prescription coverage from

another source and might not need to get a Part D plan (see "Who might be thinking about skipping Part D.")

Contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 or Alaska's State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) at 1-800-465-6065 for additional information about the timelines for enrolling in Medicare Parts A, B, and D.

FOR MORE HELP COMPARING PART D PLANS OR OTHER QUESTIONS, CALL 1-800-478-6065 OR THE NATIONAL MEDICARE HELPLINE AT 1-800-MEDICARE.

Changing Part D Plans - Whether, When, and How

If you already have a Part D plan that is continuing into 2013, you don't need to take any action to continue into 2013. You should have received an "Annual Notice of Change" from your Part D insurance provider by September 30. This notice gives you information on the premiums and general changes, but it does not have to include changes about what drugs will be covered by the plan.

Plans often make changes annually - there may be new premiums, co-pays and changes in the lists of drugs that are covered. We recommend you evaluate your prescription drug coverage each year to determine which plan best fits your needs for the coming year. You can compare plans yourself at www.medicare.gov (see "Do-it-Yourself Plan Comparison Searches," or get help by calling Medicare (1-800-633-4227) or Alaska's Medicare Information Office (1-800-478-6065 in Alaska only).

You can enroll or change your Part D plans from October 15 through December 7. The enrollment change will take effect on January 1, 2013. You can enroll or make changes to your Part D Plan by calling Medicare (1-800-633-4227) or going online to the Medicare website Part D enrollment section to make your enrollment selection www.medicare.gov. You can also request assistance from a Certified Medicare Counselor at Alaska's Medicare Information Office by calling 1-800-478-6065.





Get into the ACT

Reauthorize the
Older Americans Act!

New Older Americans Act (OAA) Reauthorization Bill Introduced

Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, Senator Mark Begich of Alaska along with thirteen other co-sponsors introduced federal legislation to reauthorize the Older Americans Act. The purpose of the Older Americans Act is to provide funding for local senior service programs (such as the senior nutrition program, transportation, senior protection, senior vocational training, legal assistance for seniors, among other important services), establish training and research projects, stimulate the development of innovative and/or improved services for the elderly, and to continue the aging network. The last time the OAA was reauthorized was in 2006.

“With our senior population rapidly expanding, reauthorizing the Older Americas Act is needed now more than ever,” said Senator Begich. “The bill delivers essential services to our seniors while saving taxpayer dollars, allowing them to maintain their independence and keeping them safe from potential elder abuse.” Funding from the Older Americans Act funds senior nutrition programs. Proper nutrition helps to keep seniors healthy and independent reducing health care expenses.

Originally enacted in 1965 along with Medicare and Medicaid, the Older Americans Act was the first initiative by the federal government to provide comprehensive assistance to seniors. With 10,000 Baby Boomers turning 65 every day and with the worst economic downturn since the 1930s, help for seniors is needed now more than ever.

Among the new programs for seniors and their families, the legislation would authorize funding for the coordination of dental care to low-income older Americans, focus more on economic security and provide special assistance to veterans. The legislation also includes increased support for family caregivers and would make gerontologists and geriatricians eligible for the National Health Services Corps.

Senior Voice

Want to find out the latest information on Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, senior happenings around the state plus so much more? The Senior Voice is a great monthly newspaper that focuses on senior issues statewide. The Senior Voice is published by the Older Persons Action Group, Inc., an agency that was established in 1978. The subscription price is only \$20 annually for Alaskan residents. The publication is free to low income seniors and is also available at most senior centers and places where Alaskan seniors gather. For information on the Senior Voice please call 800-478-1059.



Getting to Know Paula Pawlowski, New Chair of the Alaska Commission on Aging

1. Tell us about your background.

I am currently employed by the Alaska PTA as Executive Director of the Parent Engagement Program. Previously, I worked for the State Training and Employment Program funded under Department of Labor that provided training and job coaching assistance to the unemployed and underemployed. In the past I served as a volunteer trainer for National PTA (10 years) and currently as a mentor for states. In this capacity, I conduct workshops on nonprofit board management that include board member training, conflict resolution, advocacy, public speaking, and leadership training and management. I also worked for Bridge Builders of Anchorage as their Executive Director for two years, which was a totally fabulous experience and used my background of multiple cultures.

I was born in Anchorage and have a family history in Fairbanks since 1897. I was raised in a military family from age six which means

that I lived in nine states and attended eleven schools before I graduated from high school. During my 26 years of marriage to a military spouse, I focused on enriching my family and held a variety of positions that included ten years of providing Home Day Care, managing art galleries, book stores and volunteering for museums on both coasts. Bob and I have three children of our own from age 40 to 32 and one grandchild. We had three exchange students (from Costa Rica, Japan, and Switzerland) and our oldest son lived in Sweden with AFS (American Field Service).

2. Why were you interested in becoming a Commissioner on the Alaska Commission on Aging?

I was originally approached by the office of Governor Frank Murkowski and I investigated the ACoA website for Alaska (<http://alaskaaging.org/>) and the National website (now Administration on Community Living, <http://www.aoa.gov>) and realized that there are huge needs and gaps for Alaska Seniors. With PTA I advocated for parents and children and with ACoA I advocate for seniors.

3. Why did you want to be Chair of the Alaska Commission on Aging?

I felt that the Commission was making great progress under the past Commission Chair,

Sharon Howerton. We will be losing a couple of long-standing Commissioners due to term limits and I wanted to insure stability to the Commission and to continue the advocacy work we had started.

4. What do you want people to know about the Alaska Commission on Aging?

I want the seniors of Alaska to know that we are currently working on your future. The Commission is doing everything we can to make Alaska a wonderful place to grow old.

5. What would you like to accomplish in your two years as chair?

I am a process development specialist so I want to work specifically on even better Commission processes for partnerships, for better board engagement, and to produce additional tangible results.

We are very excited to have Paula as our chair for the next two years!



2012 Advocacy Accomplishments for Senior Programs

In looking back at the advocacy accomplishments for funding and legislation approved last session for senior programs, we have much to celebrate! Senior In-Home services, a senior grant program administered by the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services, received an additional \$425,000 in base funding to provide case management, chore and respite to address the waitlist of seniors for these core services. Senior In-Home services help older adults maintain their independence and provide support for their unpaid family caregivers. Adult Day programs, another senior grant-funded program under the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services, received an additional \$202,500 in base funding. Adult Day programs serve seniors with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD), physical and other cognitive impairments by providing a safe and socially enriching environment. The additional funding will enhance current services and help start a new adult day program in an underserved area. There was also funding approved as a one-time increment for the Alaska Complex Behavior Collaborative, administered by the Division of Behavioral

Health, to provide intensive consultation and training to address the needs of vulnerable Alaskans with complex behaviors, including persons with ADRD and challenging behaviors, who are at risk for institutional or out-of-state placement because of the limited availability of services for this vulnerable population.

The capital budget provided generous funding for senior projects including coordinated transportation serving seniors and persons with disabilities (\$2 million); Alaska Housing Finance Corporation's Senior Citizen Housing Development Fund for development of new senior housing as well as for improving accessibility and energy efficiencies in existing senior housing (\$4.5 million); a variety of senior center improvement projects (\$3.79 million); and many other senior-related capital projects statewide. The capital budget for senior-related projects totaled more than \$31 million.

There were also a number of bills passed last session that benefit Alaskan seniors. They include the Governor's sponsored Protection of Vulnerable Adults/Minors (SB 86) to strengthen laws against financial exploitation and other forms of abuse; Loan Forgiveness and Financial Incentives for Health Care Professionals (HB 78) to strengthen Alaska's health care workforce; funding for the State's Immunization Program (HB 310) to provide

temporary program funding in the absence of federal funds and added funding for the Shingles vaccine to help seniors who are not covered under Medicare Part D afford this expensive vaccine; establishment of a permanent Community and Public Transportation Advisory Board (HB 131) to address the ongoing transportation needs of seniors and persons with disabilities; and passage of the Senior Citizen Housing Development Fund (HB 65) to allow regional housing authorities access to these grant funds to increase the availability of senior housing statewide, including rural and remote regions of the state. We greatly appreciate the support from the Governor and Legislature received last session for funding and legislation that benefit Alaska seniors!

September was an important month for Alaska seniors that recognized Alaska Senior Fall Prevention Awareness (September 22nd-28th), Employ Older Workers Week (September 24th-28th), Vulnerable Adult Awareness Month, National Senior Center Month, and of course, Grandparents' Day (September 9th).

Until Next Time,



Denise Daniello, ACoA
Executive Director



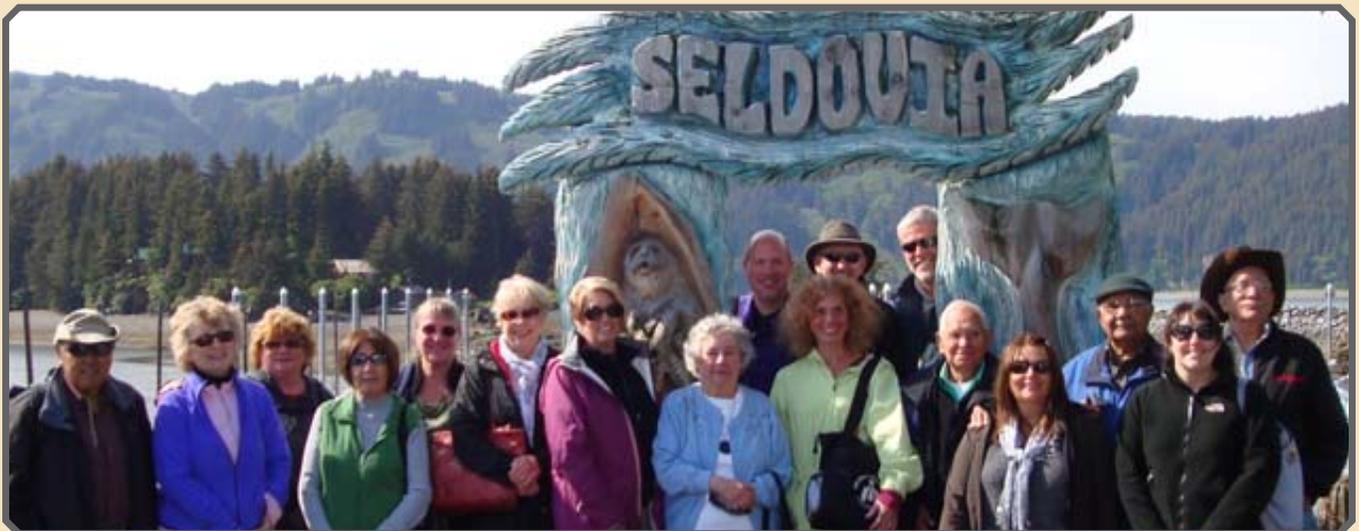
ACoA Commissioners and others Choose Respect. For more information on the Governor's Choose Respect campaign, please visit gov.alaska.gov/parnell/priorities/choose-respect.



Audience members learn about Tai-Chi at a Falls prevention program in Juneau co-sponsored by the Alaska Commission on Aging and the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services.



Diana Weber, Long-term Care Ombudsman, Nancy Burke, Program Officer for the Alaska Mental Health Trust, Rita Bowen, Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training program coordinator visit senior housing in Homer as part of ACoA's rural outreach visits to the Kenai.



ACoA Commissioners and others take a tour of senior services providers in Seldovia.

STATE OF ALASKA



Executive Proclamation by *Governor Sean Parnell*

WHEREAS, seniors are the fastest growing age group in our state, with 91,000 Alaskans over the age of 60; and

WHEREAS, falls are the leading cause of nonfatal injuries for Alaskans aged 65 and older, and are the leading cause of fatal injury for Alaskans 75 years and older; and

WHEREAS, approximately one-third of our seniors over the age of 65 and half of those over the age of 80 will fall each year, with those who have fallen once being two or three times more likely to fall again; and

WHEREAS, at \$19 million annually, the statewide cost of treating fall-related injuries is high; and hospitalizations resulting from falls rose in recent years; and

WHEREAS, elderly Alaskans can reduce the risk of falls by exercising regularly to increase strength and balance, reviewing medications with a doctor to guard against dizziness, maintaining updated vision and hearing aids, and obtaining improvements to make their homes more accessible; and

WHEREAS, family, friends, neighbors, and community organizations can support older Alaskans who desire to age independently in the privacy and comfort of their own homes by assisting with errands and keeping walkways and sidewalks clear of snow and ice.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Sean Parnell, Governor of the State of Alaska, do hereby proclaim September 16 – 22, 2012 as:

Senior Fall Prevention Week

in Alaska, and encourage all Alaskans to commit to do their part in preventing falls and raising community awareness of the risk of falls for our senior Alaskans.

Dated: September 11, 2012



Sean Parnell
Sean Parnell, Governor

*who has also authorized the
seal of the State of Alaska to
be affixed to this proclamation.*

STATE OF ALASKA



Executive Proclamation by *Governor Sean Parnell*

WHEREAS, older workers play an increasingly important role in maintaining Alaska's economy and leadership in the global marketplace, as many work past a traditional retirement age or rejoin the workforce; and

WHEREAS, the number and proportion of older Alaskan citizens continues to grow; in 2011, 150,077 Alaskans, roughly 21 percent of Alaska's population, were 55 years of age or older; and

WHEREAS, with their depth of wisdom and life experiences, older workers bring maturity, dedication, dependability, and a strong work ethic to any workplace. Organizations are strengthened by their unique skills and character traits; and

WHEREAS, younger employees benefit from the example and mentorship provided by older workers, whose insights and perspectives are invaluable; and

WHEREAS, during the last week of September, we recognize the value of older workers and their importance to our state's economy, and extend our appreciation for those who assist with job placement and training and other services related to employing older Alaskans.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Sean Parnell, Governor of the State of Alaska, do hereby proclaim September 24 – 28, 2012 as:

Employ Older Workers Week

in Alaska, and encourage employers to develop strategies for employing older workers and highlighting the contributions of those already working in their organizations.

Dated: September 11, 2012



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sean Parnell".

*Sean Parnell, Governor
who has also authorized the
seal of the State of Alaska to
be affixed to this proclamation.*

Alaska Commission on Aging Website Information

- Please visit the Alaska Commission on Aging website for information on our upcoming meetings, minutes from previous meetings, family caregiver resources, the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services, FY2012-FY2015, current data on Alaska's senior population plus much more. We update information regularly so please visit our site at www.alaskaaging.org.

Are you aware that...

- An estimated one-third of seniors over the age of 65 and half of those over the age of 80 will fall each year. Falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injury for Alaska seniors.
- The estimated hospitalization cost for all senior falls in Alaska was \$19.2 million or \$28,614 per hospitalization based on a five-year average of 2005-2009. (State of Alaska Epidemiology Bulletin January 2012).
- Older adults who fall once are two to three times more likely to fall again (National Council on Aging 2012).

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) has been working with a coalition of state and non-profit agencies to prevent falls of older Alaskans through the Alaska Senior Fall Prevention Coalition. This year several communities held special events to highlight this issue. Please visit our website for information on what you and your community can do to help prevent senior falls. The Governor signed an official Proclamation to promote greater public awareness that falls are not an inevitable part of aging and that most falls can be prevented through exercises to improve strength and balance (such as Tai Chi); regular review of all medications by a health care provider; annual vision and hearing exams and removing hazards in the home.

Jon Erickson EdD, ACOA New Planner II

This is to introduce to you a new staff member with the Alaska Commission on Aging, Jon Erickson EdD. He is assigned to work as a Planner II which entails compiling statistics, data analysis, editing, and other supports as needed in the daily operation of the Commission.

Dr. Erickson holds an undergrad, masters and doctorate in educational statistics from Washington State University. He has three children ages 23, 27 and 31. ACoA can expect a proactive and customer support focus from Jon. As a side note, Jon is an active runner having just completed his 7th half marathon in the last four years.

Please feel free contact him at 907-465-4792 or email at jon.erickson@alaska.gov.



Jon and his youngest son, James, take time together. James is in the Navy and stationed in Guam.

Did You Know...

- In 2011, there were an estimated 98,164 seniors in Alaska, representing an 8% increase over census year 2010. (DOLWD, Research and Analysis 2012)
- From 2000 to 2010, the Alaskan senior 60+ population has grown by 71.4%. Many baby boomers are turning 60. The number of Alaskans age 60 to 64 has grown from 17,327 (2000) to 35,938 (2010). (DOLWD Research and Analysis)
- The average Alaska senior household is 2.7 persons compared to the average U.S. senior household size of 1.9 persons. (Alaska Economic Trends August 2012)
- Nearly 8 percent of Alaska seniors live with grandchildren, in contrast to 4.8 percent for the U.S. as a whole. (Alaska Economic Trends August 2012)
- Permanent Fund Dividend data show overall migration rates. Annually, 3% of persons age 65+ move to Alaska as compared to 4% who leave the State which translates into an average net loss of 471 seniors annually from 2000 to 2010. (DOLWD, Research and Analysis 2012).
- In 2010, 80% of Alaska seniors lived in Anchorage/Mat-Su, Fairbanks North Star Borough, Juneau

and the Kenai Peninsula Borough. That trend is expected to continue. (Alaska Economic Trends August 2012)

- The population of Alaska Native Elders is growing, but not as fast as the non-Native population. The State projects that the Alaska Native senior population will more than double between 2010 and 2030 — from 7,870 to 18,293 people — but the Alaska Native share of the total will be less, as the massive influx of young people during the '70s and '80s was largely non-Native (Alaska Economic Trends August 2012).
- Though seniors work less, their incomes are an important part of the economy. The median income of Alaska households headed by people age 65 or older was \$45,414 during the period 2006 to 2010 — much lower than the \$66,521 earned by the average Alaska household but considerably more than the average senior-headed household in the U.S. (\$33,906). (U.S. Census 2010)
- Retired seniors as a whole contribute at least \$1.9 billion annually to Alaska's economy which includes their retirement income and health care spending. This source of income is one of the state's top economic sectors. (ACoA's updated

estimate of the University of Alaska Institute of Social and Economic Research 2004 figure.)

- Over 90 percent of Alaska senior households received income from Social Security in 2012. The average amount was nearly \$16,000 per year in Alaska (Alaska Economic Trends August 2012).
- Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) Senior Housing Office (October 2012) reports 565 seniors seeking senior public housing who are on the statewide public housing waitlist (that includes a total of 6,805 individuals).

**The Alaska
Commission on Aging
gathers city, state
and national senior
data and publishes
the Annual Senior
Snapshot that shows
the most current data.
To see past Senior
Snapshots go to our
website at [www.
alaskaaging.org](http://www.alaskaaging.org).**

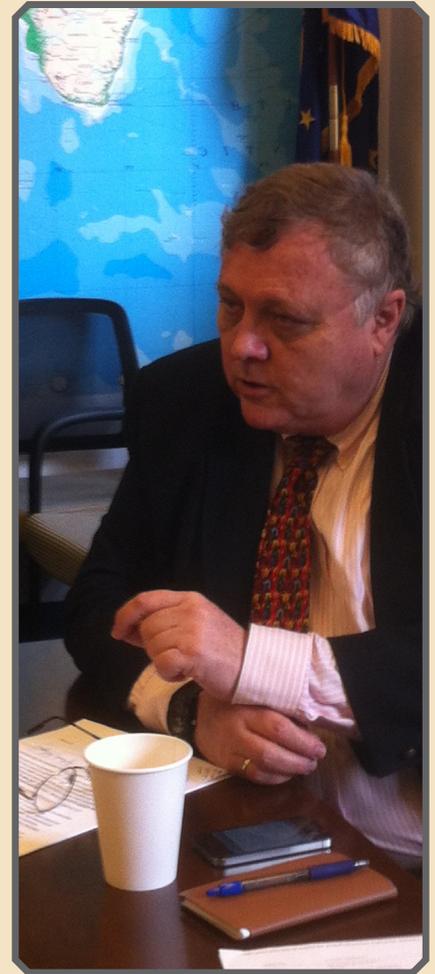
Director's Corner
(Continued from page 1)

two Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia (ADRD) Community Forums in Homer and Soldotna to gather information about the needs of people with ADRD and their caregivers in those communities. This input, along with information from other ACoA-sponsored ADRD community forums and data sources, will be used to develop a new State Plan for Persons with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia through an ADRD State Plan Steering Committee to be formed in the coming year. We thank Karen Kelly, Executive Director of the Homer Senior Center, and Jan Fena, Executive Director for the Soldotna Senior Center, for their gracious hospitality in providing meeting space for the Commission.

At the August ACoA meeting, Commissioner Paula Pawlowski of Anchorage, voted as Chair of the Commission at ACoA's April board meeting, "received the gavel" from Sharon Howerton who served as ACoA's Chair for the past three years. Paula has a long distinguished career with the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) as director of the Parent Engagement Program for Alaska PTA and as a professional nonprofit board trainer for the National PTA. Paula is the former Executive Director for Bridge Builders of Anchorage and a dedicated community volunteer. ACoA

Commissioner Pat Branson from Kodiak was elected as Vice Chair. Pat has served as the Executive Director for the Senior Citizens of Kodiak, Inc. for the past 25 years. In March, Pat received the Founders Award presented by the National Institute of Senior Centers. This award is presented to one individual nationally for their outstanding contributions to senior centers. She was recently appointed by Governor Parnell to the newly formed Alaska Community and Public Transportation Advisory Board. Pat is the Mayor of the City of Kodiak.

The Commission also recognized the achievements of long-time Commissioners and fellow senior advocates at the August meeting who will be moving on to new life ventures. Sharon Howerton was honored with a legislative citation that was sponsored by Representative Paul Seaton of Homer and co-sponsored by a number of Legislators for her outstanding accomplishments in civil service as a volunteer dispatcher with the Chugiak Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department, small business owner in Homer, career in affordable senior housing development with Alaska State Housing Authority (now known as Alaska Housing Finance Corporation) and as a passionate senior advocate. Representative Seaton presented and read the citation to Sharon in-person at the meeting. ACoA Commissioner Betty Keegan, of Wrangell, was recognized



Thank you to Pat Luby for all your help with senior advocacy. Pat recently retired for AARP.

for her eight years of service as an ACoA Commissioner through a humorous, yet inspiring poem presented by ACoA Commissioners and staff that described her passion for promoting senior causes. Pat Luby, AARP's Advocacy Director, was also honored by the Commission for his dedicated and compassionate advocacy work for Alaska seniors as he prepares to leave Alaska later this fall with his wife to care for an elderly family member.

Alaskan Seniors: Living Longer, Growing Stronger
Alaska Commission on Aging
P.O. Box 110693
Juneau, AK 99811-0693

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**Event
Calendar**

SAVE THE DATE: Alaska Senior Housing Summit

When? December 12, 2012 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Where? Wilda Marston Theatre, Loussac Library, 3600 Denali Street, Anchorage

Who? Policymakers, senior housing developers and owners, contractors, investors, providers, seniors and the public

Why? To bring together multiple stakeholders and discuss strategies to improve the development of appropriate senior housing along the continuum of care and address the needs of a growing Alaskan senior population.

Refreshments and lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to the Alaska Commission on Aging by calling 907-465-3250 or email to sherice.cole@alaska.gov. Sponsored by the Alaska Commission on Aging, Department of Health and Social Services, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority.