Creating Rural Age Friendly Communities

Laura Thomas, Director of Aging Well
Prairie Five Community Action’s service area

Less than 1% of the state’s population
Montevideo is the largest town (pop 5200) and has the only Walmart.

Lac qui Parle county had a -10% population growth since 2010 and has a median age of 50.
This is rural Minnesota.
Y – yes this basic service exists. N- No it doesn’t.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>POP</th>
<th>65+</th>
<th>Restaurant</th>
<th>Gas Station</th>
<th>Conv. Store</th>
<th>Grocery Store</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beardsley</td>
<td>Big Stone</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>Big Stone</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graceville</td>
<td>Big Stone</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ortonville</td>
<td>Big Stone</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maynard</td>
<td>Chippewa</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milan</td>
<td>Chippewa</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montevideo</td>
<td>Chippewa</td>
<td>5166</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarkfield</td>
<td>Yellow Med</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granite Falls</td>
<td>Yellow Med</td>
<td>2638</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hazel Run</td>
<td>Yellow Med</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boyd</td>
<td>LQP</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>56%</td>
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<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>LQP</td>
<td>1674</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marietta</td>
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<td>169</td>
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<td>Y</td>
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<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benson</td>
<td>Swift</td>
<td>3113</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clintarf</td>
<td>Swift</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holloway</td>
<td>Swift</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Challenges on the Prairie

• Lack of basic resources such as gas stations and grocery stores
• Older people living alone with long distance children
• Lack of people in their “prime working years”
• Agrarian culture
Agrarian Cultural Characteristics

• Hard working....Won’t accept something they haven’t worked for or earned
• Independent....Why are you offering a solution for something isn’t a problem?
• Resourceful....Disinterest/distrust of that which hasn’t come from the community
• Determined...Set in their ways
• Appreciation for history and tradition....The latest/greatest/newest thing out of the metro holds no appeal. No thanks to the gimmicks.
Prairie Five’s Innovative LIVE WELL AGE WISELY Approach

• P5’s Age Friendly Communities Initiative: Live Well Age Wisely
• P5’s Mobile Community Center (Live Well Age Wisely on the Go!)
• P5’s Hot/Cold food truck (P5 Meals on the Go!)
Age Friendly Communities

LIVE WELL AGE WISELY approach

• Re-imagining aging

• Community-based – no one looks good in a one size fits all tee-shirt! Who is the trusted voice in the community?

• Building connections and Relationships – humble yourself and listen, you aren’t the aging expert, the community is

• Aging services is not a numbers game!
Mobile Community Center: Live Well Age Wisely On the Go!

We bring services to older adults and address issues such as malnutrition, low fixed incomes, lack of socialization and loneliness.
Versatile – variety of service delivery

- Bring life back to the senior centers that go unused due to lack of staff
- Vehicle equipped to provide services on board in towns where no meeting facilities exist (support group location)
- Services may be provided in resident’s home which allows for observation of safety issues and health deterioration checks
- Partner events with agencies, providers (Flu Shot Clinic, Census 2020)
- Medicare on the Go! Open Enrollment tour
Innovation Continues in Pandemic Era

- Tablet lending library (including Technology orientation program and online resources library)

- Tele-Information Service for Older Adults and their Caregivers
P5’s Hot/Cold Food Truck
Multi-purpose Vehicle

• Addresses the need for older adults to have easy access to fresh or frozen healthful and delicious meals
• Low population means it’s difficult to find volunteer drivers for meal delivery
• Raises awareness of the services and is awesome publicity
• Reduces social isolation and serves as a safety check
• Resources for older adults kept on board
BY IMPLEMENTING COLLABORATIVE AND CREATIVE APPROACHES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF OLDER ADULTS IN RURAL MINNESOTA RIGHT NOW, WE SERVE AS AN EXAMPLE OF INNOVATION THAT OTHERS MAY DRAW FROM FOR DELIVERY OF AGING SERVICES AND CREATING AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES.
I welcome your questions and suggestions!

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320-226-8861 (Tele-Information line for older adults)
320-269-6578
Aging services is not a numbers game!