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Calendar

- Life@50+ | AARP’s National Event & Expo
- National Grandparents Day
- Senior Expo 2008
  Sept. 25, Wichita Events will take place at Botanica – The Wichita Gardens, Exploration Place, The Wichita Art Museum and Old Cowtown. For information, call 316-660-7298.
- Kansas Senior Spelling Bee
  Oct. 3, Salina To register, visit www.salhelp.org/aging/spellingbee.
- Senior Expo 2008
  Oct. 14, Overland Park For information, call 913-715-8923.
- Volunteer
  Become a long-term care ombudsman. Be an advocate for residents of long-term care facilities. Call 1-877-662-8362.
  Help others at tax time. AARP Tax-Aide needs volunteers to help low-income and older Kansans. Call 1-888-448-3619 or visit www.aarp.org/taxaide.

Hats Off to a Special Guest

Journalist Juan Williams signs copies of his book, My Soul Looks Back in Wonder: Voices of the Civil Rights Experience, for members of the Kansas City, Kansas Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. Mr. Williams spoke about political awareness and involvement in the upcoming election.

Long-Term Care Funds Head Home

A NEW LAW GIVES more Kansans the option to age in place. Senate bill 365 ensures that state dollars will support individuals as they move from long-term care facilities into home and community settings.

Previously, the mechanism that allowed state nursing home care funds to be transferred to community care was capped at 80 residents per year. The new law lifts that cap and allows funds to “follow the person” back into the community after three months’ stay in a long-term care facility.

The law also directs the state agencies responsible for long-term care to create a coordinated monitoring and review system that will speed determination of residents’ eligibility for benefits. AARP and other supporters see the measure as a crucial first step in “rebalancing” long-term care, shifting from costly institutional settings to a more person-centered system. On average the state saves $17,000 per person per year by serving residents in their communities rather than nursing homes.

“We know from surveys that most Kansans want to remain in their homes and communities,” said AARP State Director Maren Turner. “This legislation will help accomplish that and improve our long-term care system as a whole.”

For more information, visit the Kansas Department on Aging at www.agingkansas.org.

**Between 1990 and 2007, the share of Kansas residents who smoke has dropped from 30.2 to 20 percent of the population.**

**Nearly 50,000 Kansas young people need mentors. Learn how you can make a difference: www.ksmentors.ks.gov.**
People

Richard Hanley, of Newton, director of the Harvey County Department on Aging, is the new chair of the AARP Kansas Diversity Council. A former program director for Inter-Faith Ministries in Wichita, Hanley is a charter member of the Diversity Council, which seeks to ensure that AARP Kansas is inclusive of all residents in its many programs and activities.

AARP Kansas volunteers Deanne Bacco, of Shawnee, and Ernie Pogge, of Lawrence, represent AARP Kansas on regional and state transportation planning committees. Bacco is a former member of the AARP Kansas Executive Council and the former director of Kansas Advocates for Better Care, a Lawrence-based advocacy group for nursing home residents and their families. Pogge is a retired professor of civil engineering at the University of Kansas in Lawrence and a past winner of the AARP Kansas Merle Bolton Award for Volunteer Advocacy. Bacco and Pogge share a long interest in transportation planning issues and in creating livable communities for Kansans as they age.

Virgil Funk of Topeka serves as president of the Kansas Association of Retired School Personnel. In June, he presided over the group’s annual convention in Great Bend. Funk is a retired elementary school principal who served five elementary schools in Topeka and one in Piper.

To learn about volunteer opportunities with AARP Kansas, please visit www.aarp.org/ks or call 1-866-448-3619 toll free.

Retired Public Employees May Get Windfall

Certain retired members of the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERS) may have a little extra money to spend this year. While members of the Kansas Coalition of Public Employees, with support from AARP Kansas, worked hard to persuade legislators to pass a cost of living adjustment for KPERS retirees, instead the Kansas Legislature voted to give KPERS members who retired on or before July 1, 1998 with at least 10 years of service, or their joint survivors, a one-time $300 benefit payment. Disability recipients who began receiving disability benefits on or before July 1, 1998 are also scheduled to receive the payment. The payment isn’t guaranteed, however, as funding will come from expanded gaming revenues. If the state of Kansas budget director determines funding is available based on gaming revenues, 31,000 of the more than 65,000 state retirees will receive the one-time $300 payment after October 1, 2008. Check www.kpers.org for updated information about funding as October approaches.

‘Divided We Fail’ Gains Ground in Kansas

Sandy Praeger (R), Kansas insurance commissioner and president of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, signs a Divided We Fail pledge. With her are AARP Kansas Advocacy Director Ernie Kutzley and State Director Maren Turner. The other statewide elected officials who have added their names to the Divided We Fail initiative are Gov. Kathleen Sebelius (D), Attorney General Stephen Six (D) and Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh (R).

Health Facilities to Recycle Unused Drugs

A recently passed state law (the Utilization of Unused Medications Act) establishes a voluntary program under which adult care homes, mail-service pharmacies and medical care facilities may donate unused medications to medically indigent Kansas residents. Medications that would otherwise be discarded can now be disbursed through more than 30 “safety net” and community health centers throughout the state. A 2001 study published in the Journal of Family Medicine estimates that more than $1 billion of medications prescribed for older adults are discarded per year. The new measure aims to eliminate medical waste and will save the state between $4 and $5 million dollars annually, according to Kansas House Speaker Melvin Neufeld (R-Dist. 115).

Kaw Nation Heritage Park.

Office Oak and Museum, the Last Chance Store and Museum, Santa Fe Trail, Old Cowboy Jail, Post Office Oak and Museum, the Last Chance Store and Kaw Nation Heritage Park.

Frontier Military Byway follows an old military trail used by the U.S. Army to transport troops and supplies between frontier forts. Fort Leavenworth, Fort Scott National Historic Site and the Mine Creek Civil War Battlefield Site are a few of the road’s historic attractions.

Wetlands and Wildlife National Scenic Byway

is a must for nature lovers. The route winds through Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Refuge — the largest marsh in the interior of the United States and the most important migration point for shorebirds in North America — and Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, a stopover for 500,000 birds during the spring migration season.

Summer Road Trips

Did you know that Kansas has nine scenic byways, two of which are national scenic byways? Totaling 5212 miles, the roads stretch throughout Kansas and showcase the state’s art, ethnic heritage, wildlife, prairies and ranchlands, as well as Civil War and Native American history. Take a trip down these routes or find more at www.ksbyways.org.

Flint Hills National Scenic Byway, in east central Kansas, passes by the Kaw Mission State Historic Site and Museum, Santa Fe Trail, Old Cowboy Jail, Post Office Oak and Museum, the Last Chance Store and Kaw Nation Heritage Park.

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In Your Pocket

Kansas Assists Grandparent Caregivers

If you are a grandparent or other relative who is raising a grandchild, you may be eligible to receive financial support through the Grandparents as Caregivers Assistance Program. To qualify you must:

❑ Be a grandparent or other qualifying relative (e.g., aunt, cousin, great-grandparent).
❑ Have legal custody of the child or children.
❑ Be 50 years of age or older.
❑ Live with the child or children for whom you are requesting assistance.
❑ Have a household income of less than 130 percent of the federal poverty level — no more than $27,560 for a family of four.

In addition, the child or children must not be in state custody, and the parent of the child or children must not live with the grandparent or relative. The monthly benefit is $200 for one child, $400 for two children and $600 for three or more children. For more information, call the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services at 785-295-3959 or visit www.srskansas.org.

The Kansas Senior Olympics men’s bowling champion, age category 65 – 69, earned a score of 688, setting a new record.

Help protect the environment. Find out what you can recycle and locate a recycling center near you: www.kansasbirp.com.
More than 40 percent of Kansas voters participated in the 2006 midterm elections, compared with only 37 percent nationally.  

Compare the quality of Kansas nursing facilities and home health agencies at www.medicare.gov; scroll to "Search Tools."  

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Associate State Director – Advocacy  
Mary Tritsch  
Associate State Director – Communications  

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS  
David Wilson  
State President  
Mae Evans  
Arneatha Martin  
Mitzl McPatrick  
John Powell  
Walter Rivera  
Toni Wellshear  

OTHER APPOINTED VOLUNTEERS  
Bill Fritschen  
AARP Tax-Aide State Coordinator  
Shirley Smith  
AARP Driver Safety Program State Coordinator  

Q&A  
Kent Cornish, a veteran Kansas broadcaster and native of Topeka, was appointed head of the Kansas Association of Broadcasters in December 2007. A graduate of the University of Kansas, he has worked in television for nearly 25 years at stations in Kansas City, Topeka and Wichita.  

Kansans Prepare To Go Digital  
Kent Cornish, president and executive director of the Kansas Association of Broadcasters, talked about what Kansans need to know about the upcoming conversion to digital TV.  

From the State President  
As the 62-year old state president of AARP Kansas, I welcome the 2008 election season. I see it as an opportunity to remind our elected officials that Americans age 50 and older care deeply about two critical issues: affordable, quality health care and lifetime financial security. We have the power to shape the political debate.  

Nationally, 41 percent of eligible voters are age 50 or older, and if past voting patterns persist, more than half of U.S. voters this fall will be 50-plus.  

That puts older adults in the driver’s seat, right? Well, only if everyone participating in the policy debate is informed.  

Through the Divided We Fail initiative, AARP, with other nonprofit groups and businesses, is calling on elected leaders to propose bipartisan solutions to the twin challenges of affordable, quality health care and lifetime financial security. At events in Kansas and across the country, members are asking hard questions of officials so that they know these issues are important, and that their answers let us know where they stand.  

To learn more, visit www.dividedwefail.org to share your story and sign the Divided We Fail pledge — or turn to page 4 to read more and sign the pledge there. You can also volunteer with Divided We Fail or as an AARP legislative advocate. Learn about your elected leaders’ stances on health care and lifetime financial security, so that you are an informed voter in November.  

You have a lot of power. Use it wisely!  

David Wilson leads the AARP Kansas volunteer team as state president.  

Q. Why do Kansans have to switch from analog to digital TV and what is the deadline?  
A. The Federal Communications Commission has chosen Feb. 17, 2009, as the date for all television stations to switch from an analog signal to a digital signal. The reason is so that the government can free up old analog frequencies and resell them to nonbroadcast companies to use for other wireless devices.  

Q. Does that mean consumers will have to replace their TV sets?  
A. No one should have to replace their current TV set. If you currently use an outdoor antenna or “rabbit ears” on your television set, however, you will need a converter box. This is a small box that is about half the size of a VHS player and can be purchased at most electronics stores.  

Q. Why do Kansans have to purchase a converter box find assistance? Will they need one converter box per TV?  
A. The U.S. Department of Commerce will provide free coupons to be used toward the purchase of converter boxes. The coupons are for $40 each and a household can request up to two. Most converter boxes cost $50 – $70.  

Q. Aren’t most Kansans already using digital TV or connected to some sort of cable TV?  
A. Yes, they are, but there are approximately 125,000 homes in Kansas that do not have all of their TV sets connected to cable or satellite. This would include homes that might have cable or satellite, but also have a TV in a spare room or basement that uses rabbit ears.  

To request converter box coupons and to find more information, visit www.dtv2009.gov, or call 1-888-DTV-2009 or 1-877-530-2634 (TTY).  

Use Your Voting Power Wisely  

39.2  
The percentage of Kansans 55 and older who are employed, more than 4 points higher than the national rate.  

Q. Where can Kansans who have to purchase a converter box find assistance? Will they need one converter box per TV?  
A. The U.S. Department of Commerce will provide free coupons to be used toward the purchase of converter boxes. The coupons are for $40 each and a household can request up to two. Most converter boxes cost $50 – $70.
Older Women Face Higher Poverty Risk

On Feb. 13, Congress passed the Economic Stimulus Act of 2008, which will give $300 to $600 to most taxpayers. This boost is particularly welcomed by women. In 2004, a woman’s median annual Social Security benefit was about $8,800, compared with $12,600 for a man. Median pension income for men was $12,000, while women took in only $6,141. It’s not surprising, then, that 12 percent of women are below the federal poverty line as compared with 7 percent of men.

The single greatest force keeping women from saving during their working lives is family. Women often quit their jobs or take unpaid leaves after having a baby, take part-time jobs while their children are in school, and provide unpaid care to elderly family members.

“Family caregivers play a vital role and are the backbone of long-term care in our state,” said Maren Turner, AARP Kansas state director. “While the care they provide often goes unnoticed, their contributions often delay or prevent more costly nursing home care.”

In Kansas, 280,000 family caregivers provide services with an estimated economic value of more than $2.8 million, an amount that exceeds total Medicaid spending in the state. None of this is credited toward retirement income.

Divided We Fail continues to call on elected leaders to propose solutions to these new realities. You can help by reading and signing the pledge below.

Join Divided We Fail

I want to join with millions of other Americans to support candidates who will give us action and answers on health care and lifetime financial security. We need to elect leaders who will end the gridlock in Washington and get things done.

I pledge to:

❏ Vote for candidates who will ensure that all Americans have access to affordable, quality health care.
❏ Vote for candidates who will ensure that all Americans have peace of mind about their lifetime financial security.
❏ Vote for candidates who are specific about what they’ll do and how, and who stop speaking in generalities.

I’m using my vote to deliver the message that the time to address these problems is now. Candidates owe us action and answers, and they must commit to delivering long-term, lasting solutions if elected.

Signature .................................................................
Name ..........................................................................
Address .....................................................................
City, State, Zip ...............................................................
E-mail ........................................................................

❏ Please keep in touch with me by e-mail about AARP activities, events and member benefits.

Please mail your signed pledge to AARP Kansas, 555 S. Kansas Ave., Suite 201, Topeka, KS 66603

AARP is nonpartisan and does not own a political action committee (PAC), endorse political candidates, or contribute money to political parties or political candidates’ campaigns. AARP educates the public about issues of concern to older Americans and their families through voter guides, issue workshops and candidate forums.

Resources

To call or visit online:

Consumer Protection, Kansas Attorney General’s Office
1-800-432-2310
www.ksag.org

Federal Trade Commission
ID Theft Clearinghouse
1-877-438-4338
www.consumer.gov/idtheft

Kansas Securities
Commission Scam Hot Line
1-888-40-SCAMS
www.securities.state.kan.us

Kansas Legislature Hot Line
1-800-432-3924
www.kslegislature.org

Kansas Insurance
Commissioner
1-800-432-2484
www.ksinurance.org

Kansas Department on Aging
1-800-432-3535
www.agingkansas.org

Senior Health Insurance
Counseling of Kansas (SHICK)
1-800-860-5260

Kansas Long-Term Care
Ombudsman Program
1-877-662-8362
www.da.ks.gov/care

Kansas AARP Driver
Safety Program
www.driver-training.org

AARP Tax-Aide
www.aarp.org/tax-aide

To read:

To receive the following free AARP publications, and others, please call 1-866-448-3619.

Job Hunting: Your Guide to Success
Taking Charge of Your Health
Money Matters: Your Guide for Financial Security
Independent Living: A Look at the Issues

In Kansas, foreclosure filings have skyrocketed in the past year, rising nearly 96 percent. National average: 64.8 percent.

Get tips from the Office of the Kansas Attorney General on how to avoid identity theft and consumer scams: www.ksag.org.