



Redwood County Connection



The Official Newsletter of Redwood County

Fall Edition 2024

K9 HOS WELCOMED TO REDWOOD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

By: Sheriff Jason Jacobson

Sheriff Jason Jacobson is happy to announce the addition of K9 HOS to the patrol unit! HOS joins K9 Echo in the Sheriff's Department. The Redwood County Sheriff's Department received grant funding from the Opioid Settlement Funds through Southwest Health and Human Services. Grant received was used for the addition of a K9 to the department. K9 HOS was purchased this past summer through McDonough K9, located in Blaine, MN.



HOS (Head of Security) is a 15 month old Belgian Malinois from the Czech Republic. HOS is a dual purpose K9 trained to detect controlled substances and serve as a tracking/apprehension dog. Deputy Carter Kaiser was selected as the handler for HOS. The duo is currently enrolled and participating in a 12-week training course. Upon completion, they will be actively patrolling the county.

The Sheriff's Office recently ran a poll on social media to determine the name for the newest K9 member. The community was able to pick from several names, with HOS gathering the most votes. Thank you to those who participated!

The addition of a second K9 unit provides valuable coverage in Redwood County. The Redwood County Sheriff's Office recognized great results since reestablishing the program last year. Both K9's and their handlers train to the United States Police Canine Association "USPCA" standards.

Watch for additional updates on the Redwood County Sheriff's Office Facebook page!

Redwood County Veterans Service Office

OPERATION GREEN LIGHT FOR VETERANS

November 4th - 11th, 2024

Light it **green** to welcome American's veterans home

REDWOOD COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER 403

Southwest Minnesota

Redwood County Veterans Service

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY SHERIFFS NACo.

ROAD AND BRIDGE UPDATES

2025 Construction Plan: The project map shows planned construction of bridges over the next five years along with current mill, overlay and chip seal plans for 2025.

Bridge Update: The wet weather and flooding throughout spring to mid-summer drastically slowed contractors throughout the state's bridge building industry. Regardless of the weather, Redwood County is projecting to complete construction of 12 bridges this year, two of which are over the Redwood River on County Road 51 and 8. Despite all the bridge work, Redwood County continues to have the most bridges in poor condition of any county in Minnesota. Out of 280 bridges, 63 are rated in poor condition, 21 of which are county structures and 42 are township structures. Redwood County is second to St. Louis County (50 in poor condition out of 700 bridges), followed by Mower County (34 in poor condition out of 365 bridges), and then Ramsey County (22 in poor condition out of 137 bridges). As a means of comparison, Redwood County has the 11th most bridges of any county in the state. Needless to say, the Highway Department and Townships have their work cut out for them, all the while MnDOT continues to allocate extra bridge funds to us in support of bridge replacements.

Road Update: As of 2024, Redwood County has 65 miles of needed roadway rehabilitation that is currently unfunded over the next five years, totaling \$27,000,000. This includes portions of County Roads 4, 5, 7, 10, 17, 18, 78 and 133. With so many unfunded miles, road rehabilitation plans will continue to be flexible, recognizing road priorities may shift due to rapid changes in highway conditions, public input, priorities and budget constraints.

Section Corner Remonumentation Project: In 2024, Redwood County was awarded a \$300,000 grant for a section corner remonumentation project from the State of Minnesota. This project will make section corners available to all residents and

property owners, with the intent to save taxpayer dollars when private and public land is surveyed, and to allow for more accurate surveys within the County. The state has funded these county projects in order to support economic development of existing agricultural, commercial and residential land and build public confidence in real property records. The intent of the project is to go back and find the original monuments and to not change any property boundaries. Therefore, there will be excavation occurring with the project in order to find original monuments. With the funds, 218 section corners on gravel roadways will be restored in Brookville, Sundown and Morgan Townships. Of these, 179 will have new certificate of locations prepared with county coordinates and 39 corners will be recertified. Once complete, Redwood County will apply for additional grants and continue to address the rest of the County in a phased approach.

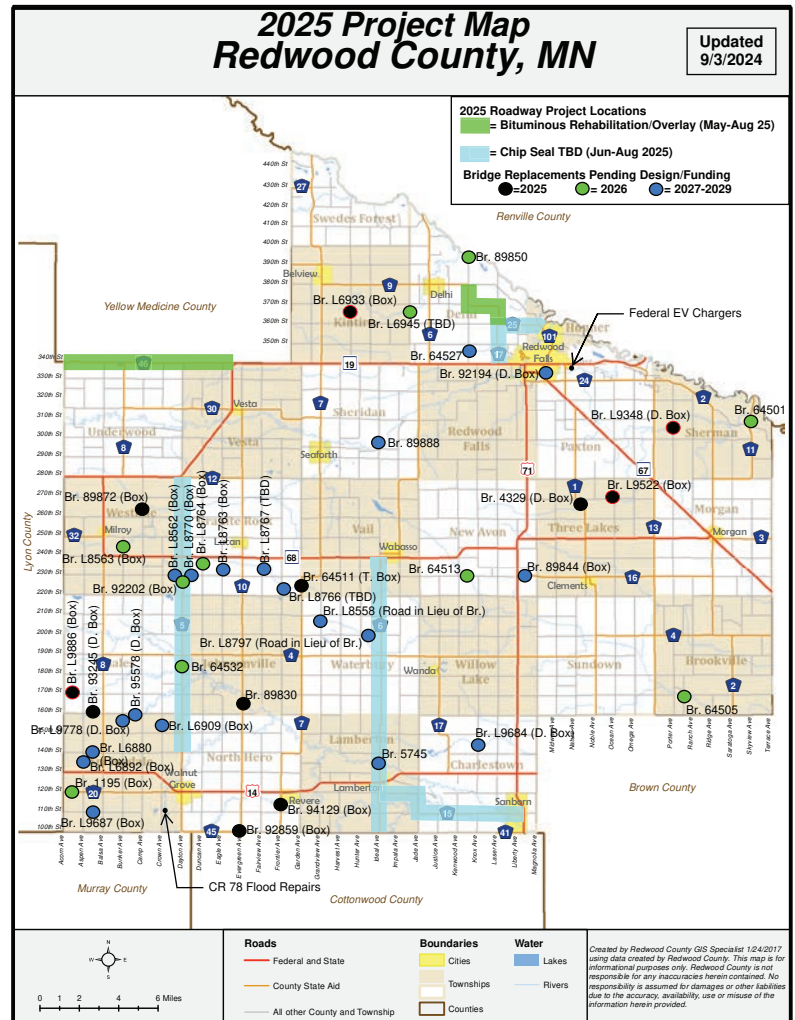
Maintenance Update:

Due to the mild 2023-2024 winter, roadway conditions remained more stable and patching work has not been as severe in 2024 as it was in the summer of 2023. Crews crack filled over 63 miles of roadway this year, which occurred during May and June. A more typical year would be around 40 miles of pavement crack filling. The highway maintenance team has put a substantial effort into re-graveling roadways over the last four years. The amount of material hauled includes: 2021: 56,174 ton, 2022:

45,360 ton, 2023: 30,061 ton, and we are set to exceed 50,000 ton in 2024.

Seasonal Help Wanted: All of the above work occurs due to the diligent and dedicated work of our 27 person Highway Department team and seasonal help. As of today there are three full time openings in the Walnut Grove, Clements and Wabasso shops. We are always looking for seasonal help as well. If you are interested in working for the highway department please do not hesitate to reach out. We can always use a hand, whether that be blowing snow, mowing, patching, crack filling, flagging traffic, operating our equipment on various projects or assisting the engineering team with construction inspection and surveying.

If you ever have any questions regarding our work at the Highway Department, please do not hesitate to call our office at 507-637-4056.



WHY SHOULD I WORRY ABOUT A FAILING SEPTIC SYSTEM?

Failing septic systems can cause numerous negative effects to human health and the environment. Failing septic systems are the most frequently reported sources of groundwater contamination in the United States. Bacteria, viruses, and parasites are the types of pathogens in wastewater and are hazardous to humans. These pathogens may be transported rapidly to nearby drinking water supplies or surface waters. A properly working septic system is an effective way to treat wastewater and prevent possible health concerns.

Indicators your septic system is failing

- backup of sewage in the home
- Decreased drain flow in toilets, showers, and sinks
- Unpleasant odors in the home
- High solids accumulation in your septic tank
- If you have not pumped your tank in the last 10 years, chances are your system is failing
- Water accumulating in the drain field
- Extremely vibrant patches of green vegetation on your drain field
- Sewage smell outside the house

Redwood County
Environmental
Office

SEPTIC LOAN & GRANT PROGRAM

Do you have a **failing** septic system?



Learn more about a low interest loan or income-based grant program to help cover new septic construction expenses!

CONTACT US
TODAY TO
LEARN MORE!

(507) 637-4023

403 S. Mill St, Redwood Falls

environmental@co.redwood.mn.us

redwoodcounty-mn.us



ELECTION DAY

November 5th



Register to Vote



Absentee Voting



Find Your Polling Place



What's on my Ballot?



View Candidate Filings

sos.state.mn.us



TRAVELING SOON?



REDWOOD COUNTY IS YOUR LOCAL PASSPORT AGENCY!

Redwood County Government Center - Administration Office
403 South Mill Street, Redwood Falls

MONDAY - FRIDAY
8 AM TO 4:30 PM

(507) 637 - 4016

REDWOODCOUNTY-MN.US



passport pictures
can be taken too!



Greetings from Plum Creek Park!

by Adam Kletscher, Park Ranger

Summer has come and gone, and here we are in the midst of Fall. We had another wonderful camping season here at Plum Creek Park. We had over 700 reservations with visitors from 40 states, 5 Canadian Provinces, France, Sweden, Switzerland, and the Virgin Islands. It is great to see people traveling from all over the world to check out our beautiful park.

The park has been bustling all year long. The mild winter didn't allow much ice fishing, but people enjoyed hiking and a little bit of sledding. We once again held over 30 youth baseball games and hosted varsity softball this spring and summer. Thanks to local volunteers and many sponsors, a new scoreboard was installed before the start of softball season. If you haven't checked out a game in the Lower Park, put it on your to-do list. Once camping season got off to a start, it was busy all summer long. July was a busy month as people from all over the world visited the park while they were in town for the Laura Ingalls Wilder Pageant. We are thankful to be a great stopping point for people passing through, not just to stay but to experience nature.

We are getting closer to beginning work on our beachfront improvement project. We are nearing the end of engineering and design and will start work sometime next summer. A lot goes into these projects, and we are excited about the finished product.

Whether you camp or just like to get outdoors, Plum Creek Park has something for you. Take a drive and head to Walnut Grove to experience our one and only county park. Reservations for the 2025 camping season will open on Tuesday, January 14, at 10:00 AM. Check out our website, plumcreekpark.com, to make your reservations.



...nature awaits your arrival



WALNUT GROVE, MN

plumcreekpark.com

UPDATES FROM REDWOOD COUNTY CRIME VICTIM'S SERVICES:

The Redwood County Attorney's Office hosted "New Laws" training at the RACC in August. This is an annual training presented by Standpoint Minnesota which is a state coalition whose mission is to promote justice for domestic and sexual violence victims. The two-day training gathered attorneys, law enforcement, victims' advocates, social workers, probation agents, and even a forensic interviewer for two days to dissect changes to Minnesota law that impact sexual and domestic violence.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month!

The theme for 2024 is "Heal, Hold & Center". This is an intentional pause and moment of recognition for advocates and survivors. Each of us know someone who has been, or is, a victim/survivor of domestic violence. This October make an intentional connection with those you know. Take a moment to check in, encourage or just remind them you are in their corner. It's never

too late to offer support, understanding, or assistance.

October is also a time to remember and honor those lost to domestic violence. In 2023, 40 Minnesota victims were killed at the hands of domestic violence. This is the highest number recorded since we began tracking domestic homicides in 1989. October 6th through the 13th, 2024, WoMen's Rural Advocacy Program will be displaying purple ribbons and the names of those 40 victims here in Redwood Falls at the falls in Ramsey Park. This visual is a powerful way for all of us to be a part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

To learn more about domestic violence and how you can support victims and survivors, contact Denise Kerkhoff, Crime

Victim Services Coordinator with the Redwood County Attorney's office at 507-637-1399 or check out our website: <https://redwoodcounty-mn.us/departments/attorney/>



2025 Solid Waste Special Assessment Dollars: How Are They Used?

The Redwood-Renville Regional Solid Waste Authority (RRRSWA) uses solid waste special assessment dollars to provide services to manage and promote sustainable waste practices.

(Your solid waste special assessment is located on your tax statement.)

Here's how these dollars are used:

Operating a Multi-County Recycling Program:

Employ both County and contracted laborers to collect, load, and transport over 5,200 tons of recyclable materials annually, achieving a curbside recycling collection rate of more than 50% in Redwood and Renville Counties.

Operating Facilities and Services:

• Multi-County Transfer Facilities:

Manage Municipal Solid Waste, Demolition, and Recycling Transfer Facilities, along with a separately located Demolition Landfill Facility. These facilities cater to both commercial and residential haulers, transporting nearly 16,000 tons of county-produced garbage and demolition materials annually to area landfills, in addition to management of 3,600 tons of on-site demolition waste each year.

• Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facilities:

These facilities, located at the Renville County Demolition Landfill (*Olivia*) and the Redwood County HHW (*Redwood Falls*), allow residents to safely dispose of all types of household hazardous waste materials such as used oil, unusable flammable fuels, florescent/LED bulbs, paints, stains, home/agriculture chemicals, batteries and more. These facilities also feature a "product exchange room" where residents can find, and reuse, good household items for free.

Additional Facility Services/ Programs Include:

• Daily residential and commercial deposit locations for recycling, demolition debris, and garbage.



- Free document destruction for residents (*small fee for businesses*).
- Free scrap metal disposal at the RRRSWA and Renville County Landfill.
- Mattress recycling (*collection and transportation services*).
- Recycling of holiday lights and electrical cords at yearly/seasonal drop sites.
- County sponsored bi-yearly tire recycling event for Renville County residents, and disposal throughout the year for Renville and Redwood County residents at the Renville County Demolition Landfill.
- Sale of backyard compost bins (*while supplies last*).
- Pop bottle recycling bins at gas stations countywide.
- Provide recycling trailers/bins for town celebrations, sporting events, and at

County Parks.

• Educational programs on recycling and solid waste management through various media channels for citizens, haulers, and contractors.

• Assist Co-ops and citizens with empty pesticide container disposal information and options.

Support for City/Resident/ Business Needs:

• Centralized contact for solid waste inquiries, disposal information, and hauler details.

• Manage and service twenty-six (26) rural/urban residential recycling sites across Redwood and Renville Counties.

• Inspections and coordination for residential and commercial demolition disposals.

• Assist with MPCA Permit by Rule Applications by providing paperwork/guidance/site inspections.

• Tax forfeited parcel review and inspections.

• Host collection events for electronic waste and appliances from April through October in Redwood & Renville Counties.



A Redwood County rural recycling container, with a locking bar, new QR code sticker and bi-lingual stickers for our Hmong speaking neighbors.



IT'S TIME TO RAISE THE BAR!

In an effort to reduce litter in and around our rural recycling drop sites, The Redwood/Renville Regional Solid Waste Authority (RRRSWA) has installed bars and locking pins that are designed to hold the lids in a closed position, especially in times of high wind.

We ask that when you, as a rural resident, visit one of our recycling drop sites, please be sure to close the lids, raise the bar and slip the locking pin back into its place. We at the RRRSWA believe with this small effort, we will see a big impact.

This is a fairly simple fix and it will add minimal time to your visit, but can greatly reduce recyclable materials and debris from becoming litter at the rural drop sites and neighboring properties.

Please help us by raising the bar!

Cathy Einerson and Bob Haney worked hard this summer to fabricate and install the locking bars & pins on all of the rural recycling drop site containers throughout Renville and Redwood Counties.

REDWOOD COUNTY HOUSING STUDY

As you may have seen in our previous newsletter and Facebook posts, Redwood County recently completed a county-wide housing study. The purpose of this study was to identify specific housing needs across the county and determine strategies to best address those needs. The decision to undertake this study was made in effort to actively support Redwood County's ability to meet its housing needs and reduce housing barriers across the county, as set forth in the 2023-2025 strategic plan. A request for proposals for this study was published in Aug. of 2023, and the proposed bid from Bolton & Menk was approved by the Redwood County Board of Commissioners on Feb. 6th of this year. Within the first several weeks, our partners at Bolton & Menk established a website for the project that included an online survey and timelines of the project. Bolton & Menk worked diligently collecting feedback from the survey, holding interviews and meetings with local stakeholders and collecting a variety of housing data for analysis from March through June of this year. After the data was collected and analysis was complete, the preliminary findings of the study were presented to the Redwood County EDA board at their meeting on Sept. 11th. The preliminary findings of the study indicate that throughout all of Redwood County there is an immense need for a variety of suitable housing options, for residents at all levels of income and family size. Currently, the majority of Redwood

County's housing stock was built before 1939 or 1970, which is considered aged and many of these units are in desperate need of repairs or improvements. Additionally, there is an overall shortage of rental housing across the county, making it increasingly difficult for prospective workforce residents to find immediate housing. The important question of course is, how does the county plan to address these findings? Thankfully, our project managers at Bolton & Menk have given us several strategies and resources that the county can implement to start addressing these immediate and long term housing needs. The EDA board is thoroughly reviewing the recommendations from Bolton & Menk, to determine what programs or incentives to implement, that will provide the most opportunity, for the most residents across the county. One of these strategies will be to develop a Redwood County Housing Trust fund, through which the County plans to offer programs to support the County's housing needs. We are confident that we will be able to implement these strategies within a timely manner, and you should expect to hear about funding programs to help improve housing opportunities across the county in the very near future. Thank you to Bolton & Menk for their outstanding work on this project and to all who participated in our housing study! Your participation and feedback in this study will have a great impact on how the County will determine future housing projects!



Meet Grady Holtberg

Meet Grady Holtberg, our new Economic Development Coordinator for the County! Grady has over 7 years experience in helping to improve Redwood County, through his work with the Minnesota Judicial Branch. We are excited to have Grady on board as we further our mission to make Redwood County a great place to live and work!

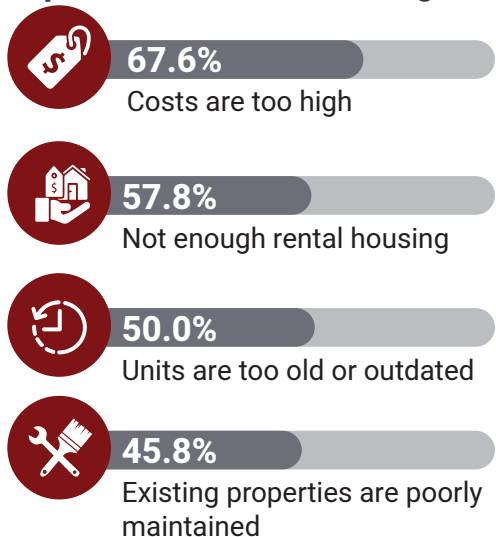
HOUSING STUDY SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

Redwood County Housing Study Open House

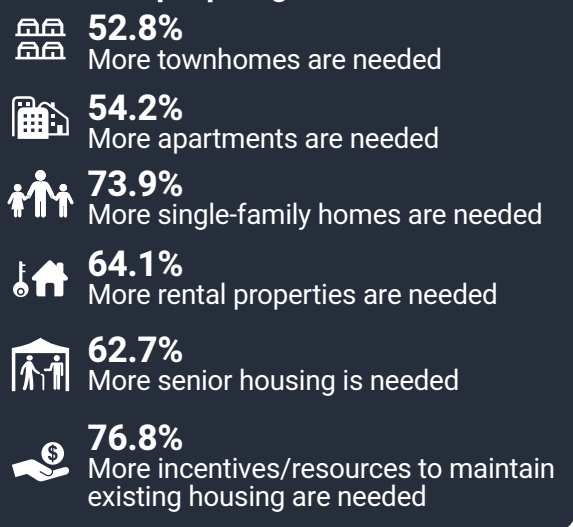


Frequent comments discussed cost (rent/mortgage, taxes, and utility deposits), limited public transportation, lack of pet policies, and some respondents had clear objections to financial support for low-income households. Many respondents mention the need for housing that senior and low- to moderate-income households can attain.

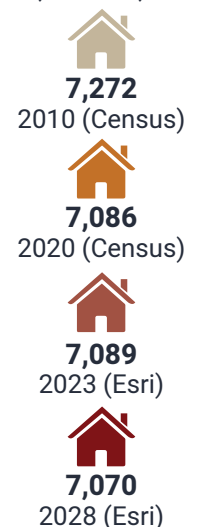
Top issues related to housing



Percent of people agree that:



Total Housing Units: Past, Present, Future



TOOLS AND TIPS FROM THE DMV

VETERANS WITH 100% SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY-

Bring in your Department of Veterans Affairs Benefits letter showing the 100% disability and you can get... Free driver's license, Free Registration for up to (2) vehicles, and no sales tax owed for vehicles purchased after July 1st 2024.

MS 171.02 Documents Needed to qualify

MS 168.012 subd. 13 Fees for Motor Vehicle

MS 171.06 subd 2c Driver's License

Effective Immediately

ALL homemade trailers registered for the first time need to be accompanied by pictures of all 4 sides, no matter what the GVW weight is.

**This is a new business process change per the state due to an increased amount of trailers that are registered "homemade" that are actual manufactured trailers.

Motorcycle title transfers-

The buyer MUST bring in the engine number off of the engine of the motorcycle at time of transfer. This will be the number stamped into the engine (generally the bottom) and in the middle of two *'s

MN 168A.15 subd 4

REMINDER!

When renewing registration (tabs) or transferring motorized vehicles, motorcycles, mopeds, and motorized homes (RV's), bring in your CURRENT insurance cards.

When renewing your Driver's License you will need to either know your social security number or have it with you.

If you need to change address on your REAL ID or Enhanced license, you NEED to bring two forms of your NEW address. Lists can be found at drive.mn.gov

INTERESTED IN STAYING UP TO DATE WITH REDWOOD COUNTY NEWS?

SIGN UP FOR EMAIL NOTICES

redwoodcounty-mn.us

REDWOOD COUNTY RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Circles are used for team building, problem solving and celebration!

We are always seeking caring and passionate individuals to volunteer!

GIVE US A CALL! (507) 637-1139

TABS & TRANSFERS

Current proof of insurance must be provided at the time of registration renewals for all vehicles, including title transfers for vehicles. Cash & check transactions can be completed using the drive-thru.

FLYING IN THE U.S.

Effective May 7, 2025, air travelers 18 yrs or older will need a REAL ID, enhanced driver's license, or passport to fly within the U.S.

ADDRESS CHANGE

If you have a REAL ID or Enhanced License & have moved to another MN address, you will need to reapply for a duplicate REAL ID. Remember to bring two proofs of residency.

reminders from the

LICENSE CENTER

(507) 637-4029

redwoodcounty.mn.us

Southwest Minnesota

Redwood County License Center



Redwood County Connection

Redwood County Government Center
 403 S Mill St
 PO Box 130
 Redwood Falls, MN 56283

PRST STD
 ECRWSS
 US POSTAGE
 PAID
 PERMIT #20

Local Postal Customer

Contacts

Administration	637-4016
Assessor	637-4008
Attorney Office	637-4010
Auditor/Treasurer	637-4013
Court Administration	616-4018
Economic Dev.	637-1122
Emergency Mgmt.	637-4035
Environmental	637-4023
Extension	637-4025
Highway Dept.	637-4056
Human Services	637-4050
License Center	637-4029
Public Health	637-4041
Probation Office	637-4047
RRRSWA	637-1800
Recorder	637-4032
Restorative Justice	637-1139
Sheriff's Office	637-4036
Technology/IT	637-4016
Veteran's Office	637-4034



Commissioners

Rick Wakefield	859-2369
Jim Salfer	342-2431
Dennis Groebner	692-2235
Bob VanHee	616-1000
Dave Forkrud	938-4269



ACE.

ADVOCATE • CONNECT • EDUCATE
 OF SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA

Our mission is to create strong, involved communities focusing on volunteerism and active living programs for adults 55 years old & above; as well as, care partners of all ages.

In 2023, Redwood County had 58 volunteer stations (locations enrolled with A.C.E. as sites for people to volunteer) where 398 volunteers actively donated 42,223 hours of service! We are turning those services hours into grant dollars to allow A.C.E. staff & volunteers to bring health and wellness classes to our county seniors for free. Two of those classes are Stepping On and SAIL. Both classes focus on improved strength and mobility to prevent falls.

For more information about our programs, please contact Susann Zeug-Hoese at 507.627.1016



The Stepping On program incorporates a group setting, plus individualized follow-up to bring falls prevention awareness to participants. The workshop covers a range of issues, including: strength and balance exercises, home hazards, safe footwear, vision impairment, safety in public places, community mobility, coping after a fall and understanding how to initiate a medication review with your primary provider. The authors of the Stepping on curriculum have shown a 30% reduction in the fall rate for those who have completed the workshop. This workshop is one hour, one time per week for 7 weeks with a follow up individualized home visit. The next class will be in spring 2025.



Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) is an evidence-based strength, balance and fitness program for adults 65 and older. Performing exercises that improve strength, balance and fitness are the single most important activity that adults can do to stay active and reduce their chances of falling. The entire curriculum of activities in the SAIL Program can help improve strength and balance, if done regularly. The initial workshop is offered one hour 3 times per week for a total of 22 sessions. Following the 22 sessions, the class can be turned into an ongoing exercise class. SAIL has a strong aerobic component to help get your heartbeat going. This class can be modified to be meet various mobility levels. This class will be offered this fall.