
NEWS RELEASE

P.O. Box 570, Jefferson City, MO 65102



For Immediate Release:

December 4, 2008

Contact:

Nanci Gonder
Office of Public Information
573-751-6062

Lieutenant Governor Kinder, Officials Release State's Third Annual Senior Report

Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder today introduced the latest version in an innovative series of reports on seniors in Missouri. The *Missouri Senior Report 2008* provides a county-by-county comparison of how seniors fare in areas such as economic and social well-being, and health status.

"Missouri took a giant leap forward two years ago when it rolled out the state's first-ever senior report," said Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder, the Official Senior Advocate for Missouri. "The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention hailed the report as nationally innovative, a way to ensure that key information on Missouri seniors is available to those who need it for planning programs and tracking trends."

The report, developed by the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) and the University of Missouri Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis, provides relevant senior data in one document.

The latest report, the third in the series, includes a new indicator that shows the impact seniors have on their local economies, according to Kinder. The report shows that, in most Missouri counties, seniors are more likely than any other age group to purchase appliances, clothing, electronics, and other services in their own communities, rather than in another town or state.

"This means seniors' money is more likely to stimulate and stay in their own local communities," Kinder added.

Missouri Senior Report 2008 also shows improvement for seniors on two other economic issues in the past few years: housing affordability and poverty.

"When seniors have to spend more than 30 percent or more of their monthly income on housing-related costs, it puts a financial burden on them," said Jane Drummond, director of DHSS. "The percentage of Missouri seniors who faced this burden declined slightly last year, to 28.5 percent, as compared to 28.9 percent in 2006, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey."

The number of Missouri seniors living in poverty also improved from 2005 to 2006. Poverty is measured by the percentage of personal income that eligible seniors and persons with disabilities receive from Supplemental Security Income.

-more-

One challenge all seniors face is physically falling down, and the problem receives special attention in the report. “More than one-third of seniors who live in the community fall each year,” said Drummond. “The death rate from these falls in Missouri is higher than the national average, and we have launched *Show Me Falls Free Missouri* to combat it.”

Show Me Falls Free Missouri is a new statewide action plan that includes strategies for decreasing the burden of falls in the state.

Today seniors comprise 13.4 percent of Missouri’s population; by 2025, the number rises to 19 percent. Increases in life expectancy and aging baby boomers are at the root of the surge, which will affect Missouri communities in different ways, varying greatly among cities, suburbs, and rural communities.

Missouri Senior Report 2008 is available via the Internet at www.missouriseniorreport.org or www.dhss.mo.gov. Missouri’s 114 counties and the City of St. Louis can find specific county information by clicking on “County Profile Tabs.”

###

Note: Audio to accompany this release is available at:

http://www.dhss.mo.gov/NewsAndPublicNotices/audio/SeniorReport08_audio.html