

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County launches new Age-Friendly Simcoe County Survey

Midhurst/February 29, 2016 – The County of Simcoe today launched a new Age-Friendly Simcoe County Survey asking residents in Simcoe County for their input on the age-friendliness of their communities. The survey is part of the County’s Age-Friendly Community Initiative, which will assist in developing strategies and local plans to help make our collective community a better place to grow older together.

The goal of this community engagement process is to collect feedback from residents 60 years of age and older, caregivers, and service providers of older adults to help understand the most pressing age-friendly priorities in Simcoe County. Feedback will be evaluated and incorporated into age-friendly strategies and future programs. The survey can be accessed online at www.simcoe.ca/age-friendly. The survey will also be available in hard copy at municipal offices and local library branches across Simcoe County.

“Our municipalities recognize the importance in adjusting our approach to ensure we meet needs and demands of our aging population,” said Warden Gerry Marshall. “This is a tremendous region for older adults to call home, offering an active, healthy and affordable lifestyle. By listening to the needs and priorities of our residents, we hope to identify further opportunities to enhance our services, programs and infrastructure to meet the needs of all our residents, regardless of age.”

This survey is the first phase of a broader community engagement process to obtain public feedback as part of the Age-Friendly Community Initiative. Over the coming months, information will also be gathered using a variety of methods including public meetings, roundtables, key informant interviews, one-to-one interviews and focus groups.

The County has also organized an Age-Friendly Community Project Steering Committee to assist in evaluating feedback, setting priorities and building long-term strategies and plans. The Committee is comprised of 30 volunteers from varying backgrounds and experience including government, planning, health services, social services, education, senior-serving and disability-related organizations as well as seniors and local business representatives. The open application process to join the Committee was open in November 2015, and was promoted through County-wide advertising. The first Age-Friendly Community Project Steering Committee meeting was held at the Simcoe County Museum on January 19, 2016. The Committee meets monthly.

The outcome of the survey depends on our residents being heard. By completing a survey, residents will automatically be entered to win one of three great prizes through a random draw:

- 1st Prize: “Sunshine Get-away in Simcoe County” for two (\$350.00 value)
- 2nd Prize a Dickey Bee Basket (\$100.00 value)
- 3rd Prize a Dickey Bee Basket (\$50.00 value)

The draw for prizes will be conducted on April 18, 2016. Winners will be notified following the draw.

Complete an Age-Friendly Simcoe County Survey before March 31st, 2016. For full details and to complete a survey visit www.simcoe.ca/age-friendly or contact the Age-Friendly Project Lead at 705-726-9300 ext. 1405 or agefriendly@simcoe.ca.

About the Age-Friendly Community Initiative

In July 2015, the County of Simcoe received funding from the Government of Ontario as part of its Age-Friendly Community Planning Grant Program. The funding program is operated through the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat and supports local governments and community organizations to undertake strategic planning and develop local plans to address aging demographics and further enable people of all ages to fully participate in community life. The County has received approval of up to a maximum amount of \$50,000 from the Government of Ontario to execute the program.

The **County of Simcoe** is composed of sixteen member municipalities and provides crucial public services to County residents in addition to providing paramedic and social services to the separated cities of Barrie and Orillia. Visit our website at simcoe.ca.

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Allan Greenwood
Director, Corporate Communications
705-726-9300 ext. 1230
705-794-9301 (mobile)
Allan.Greenwood@simcoe.ca

Collin Matanowitsch
Communications Co-ordinator
705-726-9300 ext. 1430
705-734-8386 (mobile)
Collin.Matanowitsch@simcoe.ca