

For Immediate Release
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Carlsbad Submits Age-Friendly Action Plan to AARP

Carlsbad took another huge step in continuing to serve as an Age-Friendly Community this week when Wanda Durham, chairman of the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce's Retirement Council, submitted a 93-page action plan to AARP Inc.

The program represents a partnership between AARP's Network of Age-Friendly Communities and the World Health Organization's Age Friendly Cities and Communities Program. The AARP program was founded in 2012 to encourage states, cities, towns, counties and rural areas to prepare for the rapid aging of the U.S. population by giving increased attention to factors that will influence the health and well-being of older adults.

Carlsbad joined the Network in 2014 and remains the only city in New Mexico that has been accepted to date. As members of the Network, Carlsbad was tasked with submitting a three-year action plan making recommendations on improvements and suggesting paths forward. In developing its plan, the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce's Retirement Council held multiple public meetings, conducted surveys and references previously-created community plans. The City of Carlsbad and Eddy County also assisted with the process.

"An age-friendly community is a place where people of all ages can actively participate in community activities," said Carlsbad Mayor Dale Janway, who submitted a letter in support of the Action Plan. "It is a place that treats everyone with respect, regardless of their age. It is a place that helps people stay healthy and active even as one ages. And it is a place that helps those who can no longer look after themselves to live with dignity and enjoyment."

Carlsbad's Action Plan covered eight primary domains: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Transportation, Housing, Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Civic Participation and Employment, Communication and Information, and Community Support and Health Services.

Janell Whitlock, the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce's Director of Retirement, observed that 10,000 "Baby Boomers" have been turning 65 each day since 2011. By 2030, 18% of the nation's population will be at least 65 years old.

"However, Age-Friendly, to us, means making your community more hospitable for all ages," Whitlock stressed. "We felt it was very important that our action plan additionally included mention of youth facilities, such as sports field and playground equipment, as well as services for seniors."

Also this week, Mayor Janway signed a pledge to the Center for the Future of Aging, at the Milken Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan institution. In the document, Mayor Janway pledged to ensure that

the well-being of Carlsbad's aging population is addressed by each department, agency and division. He also promised to recognize older residents as an asset for Carlsbad and celebrate their contributions to improving lives for all generations, among other items.

While the Age-Friendly Action Plan and the Center for the Future of Aging pledge represent two different agencies, the focus for both is on community, and many of the goals are identical.

"Carlsbad's greatest asset has always been its people," concluded Wanda Durham, the retirement council's chair. "The retirement council is committed to making our city a healthy, vibrant and safe place to live."



PHOTO CAPTION: Wanda Durham, Chairman of the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce Retirement Council, prepares to e-mail the City of Carlsbad Age-Friendly Community Action Plan to the National AARP and World Health Organizations. The action plan includes many projects to make Carlsbad and Eddy County friendly for all ages.

ADDITIONAL ATTACHMENT: Carlsbad Mayor Dale Janway's pledge to the Milken Institute's Center for the Future of Aging.