

# What do Florida budgets contain for seniors?

This really is a topic that more seniors should address, because an honest discussion would reveal the lack of support seniors need. Our state budget, like the national budget, could more fairly support those who bear the cost of it. The reason I say this is because the State of Florida has had about 65,000 seniors on a waiting list for various services for many years. The problem is exacerbated by an almost complete lack of local government programs available to assist the elderly.

My words may sound harsh but they are true. Development of programs that would reduce the overall numbers waiting for assistance is needed. While the word taxes strikes terror in the hearts of many, without it we would not have local governments to provide for services needed by all. For my article I want to focus on our County budget, for it is the one most capable of developing both the plan and necessary funding to support assistance to



**HELPING SENIORS OF BREVARD**  
JOE STECKLER

the elderly in Brevard.

Although the general community is not responsible for the care of an aging community, we should be more concerned with doing "the right thing". Two critical and unmet needs of seniors are affordable housing and major house repairs. But there are other serious problems that elders and those living on fixed incomes experience after age 65, so many that I could never list them all here. I assure you that there are many in Brevard who fear their ability to exist from day to day, and that is not right. We can and should do

something about it.

Several years ago a basic planning paper was developed by a small group advocating for seniors and submitted to the County for action. Nothing was done to address this effort, but the document still exists and points out the need for the County to start planning for those aging in Brevard. Why can't the County assess the needs of those growing older and living on a fixed income? We pay many on the County staff a decent living with a guaranteed retirement, whose job it should be to act on what I am discussing in this article.

We have a conglomeration of organizations taking action on piecemeal parts of the problem. Think what could be accomplished if the County developed a plan to build affordable housing and address other needs of the elderly and those living on fixed incomes. I am not talking another 1965 Older Americans Act, rather a

Brevard County plan to support local citizens who will need help to age with a semblance of dignity. Brevard is expanding in all directions, and the County will increase taxes to cover this expansion. Why not do the same for seniors?

Addressing the need for affordable housing will cost money but it should be done. And, if we effectively plan for this and other aging needs, we can be far ahead of a problem that will one day explode. This issue needs the attention of our County Commissioners. Continued failure to build affordable housing and plan for the needs of an aging community does not make sense nor is it the right thing to do when we invite people to come to live in our community. Find out for yourself what the budget contains for seniors.

Contact Helping Seniors at 321-473-7770 or at P.O. Box 372936, Satellite Beach, FL 32937.

## Calendar

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Alliance, "LGBTQ: A Closer Look - Past, Present, Future" on Thursday, June 6 from at 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at the Front Street Civic Center, located at 2205 Front Street in Melbourne. The event is free and open to the public. Participating panelists include Gina Duncan, Director

of TransAction of Equality Florida, Chaplin Barbara Kilgore: A Cocoa native, retired US Army Chaplain's Assistant with deployments to South Korea, Afghanistan and Iraq, Kat Parks, Eau Gallie High School Student representing the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), and Cortney Thompson: President of Space Coast Pride. For more information, call 321-223-9007 or visit [www.SCPAflorida.com](http://www.SCPAflorida.com).

### Friday, June 7

**Singles Meet:** The Single, Separated, Widowed and Divorced (SSWD) group will meet for lunch on Friday, May 7 at 12:30 p.m. at the Olive Garden, located at 205 Merritt Island Causeway in Merritt Island. All are most welcome to join the group. For more information, please call 321-868-7775.

**Antiques and Collectibles Club:** The Brevard Antiques and Collectibles Club

will hold its monthly meeting Friday, June 7 at the Suntree/Viera Library located at 902 Jordan Blass Road in Melbourne at 10:00 a.m. The subject will be "Anything Goes". Please bring one item for study and discussion. The club has a different topic at each meeting. The group is open to anyone having an interest in learning about antiques and collectibles. For additional information, contact George at 321-254-5831.

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Denise has Master's Degree in Social Work with a background in Geriatric Health Care and Community Wellness

Kelly is a Licensed Practical Nurse and holds her Bachelor's degree in Advanced Allied Health

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