The Celebration began with a report of the progress that has been made since September 19, 2006. Appreciation was expressed to the Johnson County Board of Supervisors for their contribution of $25,000, the Heritage Area Agency on Aging for their contribution of $20,000; to Johnson County Public Housing for agreeing to hire the Aging Specialist; to United Way of Johnson County for providing office space; and to Senator Robert Dvorsky for advocating for the State of Iowa to make a one-time contribution of $50,000.

Susan Silberman, AARP Iowa, and John McCalley, Director of the Iowa Department of Elder Affairs, both spoke of the fact that Johnson County is at the forefront of a national movement and that Johnson County is putting it all together. Director McCalley congratulated those assembled and challenged them to create a replicable model that can be used across the state and nation.

Those assembled divided into five work groups to learn in greater detail what has been done in the past year and to plan for the future. The event ended with each of the groups sharing their plans for the coming year.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND ENGAGEMENT: Facilitator: Connie Benton-Wolfe, Johnson County United Way. Dixie Cassady, First Presbyterian Church, reported that the committee she chaired recommended that a working board be established, which has been done. The two additional items they had projected were to establish a network of partners and engage the Aging Specialist as catalyst to help build partnerships and encourage collaboration between community groups and the network of partners. The group did not have time to discuss the Aging Specialist’s role as resource broker. It established four priorities relating to establishing a network of partners.

1) Focus on the “ask” – what are we saying?
   We need a Mission statement and we need to define What is the job to be done?
   All belong to a group/church/work – we need to spread the word!
   “What can I do?” Engage personal network.
   “What do we need to do?” increase awareness.
   **All are partners and we need to engage all ages.

   How do you become a partner?
   Who should be a partner? What are the criteria to be a partner?
   What is the cost?
   We could match partners w/specific areas
      Ex: SCORE model – matching individual gifts with needs.
Why become a partner?
What are benefits to partners who serve seniors well?
Economic development
Safety awareness – “walkability” benefits both aging and partners

2) Seniors as resources and assets to community
Seniors are a huge resource – let’s make this part of our message!
Match needs to resources, and gifts to needs; again Ex: SCORE model
“Mainstreaming seniors” as well as representing successful aging for all ages
Senior engagement is necessary to “have a voice”.
Seniors need to be in leadership positions & groups.

3) Education – we have “economic imperative” to educate all ages about successful aging. Educate young people about aging - intergenerational education - include the University – undergraduates -with emphasis on community service - grad students- through internships, practicum, etc. Educate others of all ages about initiative i.e. Rotary, community organizations

4) Organize – to network and engage all areas of community
Organize seniors to network, to engage, to “have a voice.”
We need “seniors in leadership roles that permeate the community.”
Marketing requires organization to use our own networks.
What materials are needed to get the word out? – Website?
Provide a way to capture picture of “senior life.”
- What does successful aging look like?
Engaging civic groups - engage the community.

HEALTH: Jill Gleason, Heritage Area Agency on Aging, and Katie Miller, Johnson County Public Health, reported that significant progress has been made on the previous objectives. They are:
- Set up a resource database with health and fitness topics for seniors.
- Set up a train the trainer program to find individuals to help establish fitness classes and educational programs for seniors.
- Develop a pilot program in a rural area to identify unmet needs in the areas of health and fitness. (A grant has been submitted for a pilot project in the Oxford-Tiffin area.
The new ideas and objectives discussed were:
- Mental Health
  o Depression and how exercise can have an impact
  o Joan Blundall of Higher Plain, Inc. in West Branch has funding through the Wellmark Foundation and has put together three Beyond Depression toolkits: one for individuals with depression, one for community members and one for medical professionals. These toolkits may be a starting point for this group.
- Caregiver Support
- Walk-ability Audits for Johnson County
  - Walking in many communities in Johnson County can be difficult, walk-ability audits need to be done at different times during the year (winter, spring, summer, and fall) in all Johnson County towns and cities.
  - Audits have been developed and used in other cities in Iowa.
- Tobacco Use
  - Having the American Cancer Society do a train the trainer session was discussed.
  - Another idea was to talk to the Iowa Colleges of Health and Pharmacy to see what programs are already out there or what programs are possible.

**HOUSING:** Amy Correia, Johnson County Social Services, and Mike Mckay, Keystone Inc., reported that the goal that had been identified was that the Johnson County housing market will provide adequate options for aging in place. The Action plan developed addressed barriers to obtaining accessible and universal designed homes. Priority actions areas addressed in the plan include: education & awareness activities, developing a centralized repository of information; and identifying policies and incentives.

The work group identified activation strategies and new areas of work in support of the goal. Primary among these strategies include:

- raising funds to print the “Practical Guide to Universal Home Design” and distribute widely;
- create an Award that recognizes efforts in new construction & remodeling;
- develop a voluntary certification program to create an incentive for universal home design in new construction;
- build new constituent groups that are championing universal design, including design professionals and the real estate association;
- create a program to support the installation of ramps to provide options for remaining in the home and aging in place;
- integrate information in a database that is dynamic and linked.

**Flip Chart Brainstorming**

Activate Strategies:

- Keep ideas (universal design) on the “front burner”
- Have a universal design home on every Parade of Homes
- See if the City of Iowa City can promote universal design homes in the peninsula neighborhood
- Have a universal design home on the remodelers parade of homes
- Find funding for the publication “Practical Guide to Universal Home Design.”
- Have information at the Johnson County Fair
- Review all print/education materials for consistency
- Create an Award (maybe call it the “Ben Moore Award”) to recognize the good work being done.
Be more active about finding the consumers with aging in place housing needs and matching them with the housing of their choice

Other areas for attention:

- Consider the affordability issues for an older home-owner – what if they can physically stay in the home, but cannot afford the maintenance and taxes
- Regarding the database, make sure that the housing information is adequately linked to other sources of information, and in a way that is easily accessible.
- Offer self-help workshops for small(er) remodeling jobs, including “how to build a ramp.”
- Create a system whereby ramps can be installed quickly
- Train persons on how to build ramps correctly
- Have “specs” for “how to build a ramp” on Building Department web sites
- Find funding to assist with small rehab projects
- Utilize Rockwell Collins retired volunteer engineers for small remodeling and design projects.
- (Note: Menards sells plans for ramps – the proceeds go to the Easter Seals)
- What about storage for when ramps need to be moved/removed?
- Think about vertical lifts rather than ramps in some situations
- Consider no-step entrances from a garage
- Promote and advertise more prominently the Certified Aging in Place Specialists
- Encourage universal design in custom and spec homes
- Target design professionals in order to promote universal design features in the homes that they design and present to the consumer
- Target real estate sector and encourage the senior specialist designations

TRANSPORTATION: Becky Groff (AARP Iowa) facilitated the discussion which was preceded by reports from Regina Bailey, Chair of JCCOG, and Kellie Elliott Kapparos, Heritage Area Agency on Aging. Regina reported on JCCOG’s response to the request of the Consortium on Successful Aging and Kellie reported on the volunteer transportation systems in the seven-county area served by Heritage.

This group established as its purpose: To meet the mobility and transportation needs of seniors to make Johnson County a Livable Community where people can age successfully. It adopted two goals:

1. Utilize citizen involvement to influence decisions made regarding allocation of resources on both local and national levels.
2. Facilitate the development of volunteer transportation programs where none exist in Johnson County.

In its discussion the following opportunities were discussed:

1. Several “physical” system improvements have been made. Opportunities to make changes in access, walking and areas with high crash incidents.
2. Iowa City adoption of Complete Streets policy and Coralville’s utilization of CS guidelines.
3. Federal transportation guidelines require citizen involvement in the planning process which is welcomed by the designated planning agency. Encourage persons to sign up to be on the mailing list of Johnson County Council of Governments (JCCOG).

4. Work group recommendations need to be data driven considering where seniors live (high and low density), access to services, and modes of mobility.

5. Several volunteer transportation programs exist in the county primarily in small communities. The programs vary in size, resources and formality.

6. There is significant interest in developing a volunteer program in Iowa City / Coralville. Explore the CASI program in Davenport.

7. Pedestrian safety is a concern in several areas of Iowa City / Coralville.

8. Citizen involvement can have an impact at both the local and national levels.

9. Coralville has free bus service to persons age 65 with Medicare card (or disabled), Iowa City could be approached to do likewise.

WEB SITE: Lis Selk, Director of the Heritage Area Agency on Aging, facilitated this discussion. Len Sandler, College of Law, and Laura Bergus, North Liberty Media Coordinator, presented the web site in its present stage of development. www.livablecommunity.org/johnsoncounty website. The home page contains information on “What makes Johnson County a livable community.” Then there will be three portals: What will help me age successfully? What is available to help me stay in my home? What are my options when I can no longer stay in my home?

Following is a list of questions raised and the discussion and responses thereto:

1. **Who/what agency should be responsible for answering the 1-800 telephone number, and during what hours should this number be staffed?**
   Currently the phone number goes to the Heritage Area Agency on Aging. The workgroup discussed who else might field questions or information requests, including the office of the Aging Specialist, because we expect inquiries about social and cultural events and other subjects that are not now in the Heritage database.

   It was noted that the phone number may be available only during regular business hours CST, which should not pose a problem as long as this is noted on the site.

2. **How will content be updated and checked for accuracy and how will new entries be added?**
   Members agreed that there needs to be a field added on the service entry form to include certification or licensing credentials. While agency leaders will be given certain rights to add or edit their entries to assure all information is up to date, all entries must be vetted for accuracy, probably by the Aging Specialist.

   It may be worthwhile to add a quick link for “suggest a service” to be added to the database, that anyone can use to in contacting the Aging Specialist.
3. **What is missing from the site?**
   The heading that appears on every page should read Johnson County, Iowa (not just Johnson County) since there are many Johnson Counties in the country.

   It was suggested that the site link to glossary of common terms that appear in category definitions, possibly using Heritage’s definitions at http://www.kirkwood.edu/haadefinitions, or possibly from a national source.

4. **What is the intended scope of the information provided on the site?**
   The site should serve as a one-stop source for connecting aging residents, potential residents and their caregivers with information on available services of all types in Johnson County. While existing agencies very well serve the need of connecting consumers with social services and urgent care concerns, this site will encompass fun and self-enrichment opportunities as well.

**Additional suggestions/plans for improving the site included:**

- Including the email address for the Aging Specialist next to the phone number on the header of every page.
- Adding a message board where registered users can exchange information, review services and network. This would have to be monitored for libelous/slanderous content.
- Including a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page, or at least instructions for finding the most commonly accessed information (can be developed based on site usage statistics).
- Adding explanatory information about the Successful Aging Initiative, such as history of the Initiative, Policy Board members and PDFs of publications relevant to the effort.
- Enlarging and adding short text descriptions to the “PDF,” “Print” and “Email” buttons.
- Having obvious links to area agencies (like Heritage) to expand searches beyond Johnson County if needed.
- Changing the verbiage on the introduction of the “What will help me age successfully?” page to better indicate that its purpose: to highlight fun and enriching activities in the area (less emphasis on human services-type information).
- Have a link or bar for What’s Going On in JC this week or something similar.
- Have a link or bar for “Quick Answers” or “Can’t Find What You Want?” or similar language that will lead you to other sources, including the libraries, etc.

General comments about the site indicated that it was “not cluttered,” was “easy to navigate” and “easy to read.” Members present also seemed to like the color scheme and icons. Comments during the assembly session about the site were overall very positive as well. Persons are encouraged to go to [www.livablecommunity.org/johnsoncounty](http://www.livablecommunity.org/johnsoncounty) and offer their suggestions.
AN INVITATION: All present were provided an opportunity to indicate their interest in helping to further this initiative. Persons expressed their interest in serving on one of the five action teams, plus their interest in assisting in a) networking, b) grant writing, c) fund raising, d) office assistance, e) voluntary transportation and f) other areas. If you have not volunteered to be a part of this exciting initiative, we invite you to join us.

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP IN MAKING JOHNSON COUNTY, IOWA, A LIVABLE COMMUNITY WHERE PERSONS CAN AGE SUCCESSFULLY.