

# **Barron Senior Center**

## **Issues & Visioning Exercise**

### **June 30, 2009**

**Participants:** 25 seniors, including one agency representative

#### **General Overview**

The participants in this group represented seniors were intended to represent senior issues in the rural parts of our region. The most major issues addressed included availability of senior housing, especially assisted living housing, in places where goods and services are accessible, combined with the desire to stay in their home community.

#### **Issues, Concerns, and Suggestions**

##### **Housing**

- Senior housing is being built in communities without supporting commercial services (grocery, hardware, etc.)
- Commercial areas are needed to support small communities – a “general store” is in communities such as Almena (Understand that it is hard to find small scale suppliers); perhaps distribution could be coordination with a large grocery store.
- Need more volunteer driver services
- Volunteer personal shoppers might help
- Assisted living units are not affordable, many are one-bedroom – need variety

##### **Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources**

- As we get older, it is more important to have cultural events closer (theater, concerts, etc.) – community arts very important
- Retain agricultural environment in the rural areas
- Lake districts do a good job to keep shorelines in good condition and water clean
- Land is mostly staying in agricultural use, just bigger farm
- Lack of water is a concern

##### **Utilities and Community Facilities**

- Senior Centers are lifeline – fitness, activities, social interaction
- Communities should be more focused on fitness – concern for youth
- Medical facilities are good in area
- Home health care is good and available
- Trails are good for walking
- Accessible fishing piers allow elderly to continue with a favorite pastime.

##### **Transportation**

- Regional coordination of transit services is big need in rural areas – services are dispersed in rural area
- Taxi services within communities would be helpful
- Need more consideration of elderly in highway design – center line on all roads, pedestrian crossings
- A bypass of Barron (Hwy 8) would reduce traffic in town
- Include churches in coordination efforts
- Need for more volunteer drivers