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Senior needs group forms

Organization seeking better options for older Wake Forest residents.

By **DAVID LEONE**
Associate Editor

WAKE FOREST — Several times a day, the bus that loops around town makes a side trip a half-mile down Rogers Road to Heritage Branch Road. There, it turns right and stops at the Crossings at Heritage retirement community.

The neighborhood wasn't originally on the loop, but town officials made the change after residents asked to be included.

It's that kind of change that a new seniors advocacy group is looking to influence in future governance.

"There is plenty of focus on kids in Wake Forest. But when it comes for seniors, there's not enough (focus)," said Deborah Bordeaux, president and owner of Stay at Home Senior Care in Wake Forest.

Bordeaux is one of several business leaders who have banded together to form the Senior Information and Networking Group of Wake Forest (SING-WF).

Other board members include Tammy Robbins, Carillon Assisted Living; Teresa

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Seniors

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Hale, Allied Rehab; Miranda Strider-Allen, Northern Wake Senior Center; and Randy Ball, Village Pharmacy.

"I envision church leaders educating business leaders on what needs they have regarding senior ministries and how business owners can help," Bordeaux said. "Business owners can educate non-profit organizations about services they offer to seniors. Concerns jointly identified by business owners and nonprofits can be presented to local town representatives so all three groups can work together to suggest improvements and ways the town can help."

At the group's first quarterly meeting held recently, Town Manager Kip Padgett shared a list of all the recreation activities the town has for seniors with the approximately 50 attendees from various organizations and businesses.

"It was an awesome event. So excited to be a part of this

group providing a voice to our seniors and their caregivers," Allied Rehab posted online after the meeting.

During a discussion at the session, one area of difficulty was broached — traffic.

"One member of the audience said there are areas around town that seniors avoid because it is too hectic," Bordeaux said. "This could hurt business owners and nonprofits (and) churches ... if senior drivers avoid these areas."

Specifically stretches of road along South Main Street and Rogers Road came up, she added.

Housing is also a concern. Though more and more seniors are moving to Wake Forest to be near family who also have moved, much of the housing is designed for growing families.

"I don't see enough affordable ranch housing. It just doesn't seem like there's enough here right now for seniors," Bordeaux said.

Right now the organiza-

tion is still in its formation stages. What they're looking for are new members from businesses and nonprofits that have a physical location within Wake Forest that serve the 50-plus age group. Churches that have a senior focus group would also be eligible to join.

Member fees, which aren't

designated yet, would primarily fund the website and for other support functions.

SING-WF also, regardless of membership, wants groups and businesses to begin thinking of ways to help seniors or represent them better through offering services, special rates or even freebies for the disadvantaged, Bordeaux said.

deaux said.

Finally, SING-WF is seeking more information from the town, such as population updates and where senior residences are grouped.

"We also hope to have Kip come back again soon to talk about Wake Forest-specific statistics on the aging adult population," Bordeaux added.

"This is a growing market segment here in town and we want to make sure we are prepared to offer the services and products they desire or need."

For more information, see the website at SING-WF.com, email info@sing-wf.com or call 919-556-2757. The group is also on Facebook.



WW FILE PHOTO

Brookdale Wake Forest residents recently celebrated the 100th birthday of one of their own. With people living longer and moving to Wake Forest to retire, more options are needed for seniors.