

NEWS from the **North Dakota Department of Human Services**

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Coalition Hosts Shred-A-Thon Event in Mandan to Prevent ID Theft and Financial Exploitation

BISMARCK, N.D. – The West Central Vulnerable Adults Coalition is hosting a document shred-a-thon event for seniors on Tuesday, October 20, 2009, from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Mandan Golden Age Services, 301 15th Street N.W., in Mandan.

Staff from Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem's Consumer Protection Division and trained coalition partners will meet with seniors to help identify documents they need to keep for personal records and to safely shred other papers.

"Our coalition works to prevent abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of seniors and vulnerable individuals. Fraud and identity theft do occur, and this event is intended to remind people about how they can guard against these serious problems," said coalition co-chair Cherry Schmidt, the regional aging services program administrator at the Department of Human Services' West Central Human Service Center.

Schmidt co-chairs the coalition with Parrell Grossman, director of the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division, which is a key partner in the public education effort.

Coalition partners also include representatives from financial institutions, clergy, higher education, other social service providers, legal services, law enforcement, medical and public health providers, and service providers. Members reside or work in Burleigh, Emmons, Grant, Kidder, McLean, Mercer, Morton, Oliver, Sheridan, and Sioux counties, and they plan to expand their efforts to the 10-county region.

To learn about the coalition or to report elder abuse or neglect, call Schmidt at 701-328-8787 or toll free at 888-328-2662. For information about preventing identity theft, contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division at 701-328-3404 or 800-472-2600.

A National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) grant helped establish the coalition.

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