

THE COMMUNICATOR

A Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging Publication

VOLUME 29 ISSUE 2

Ruth E. Jones, Executive Director

MARCH/APRIL 2021

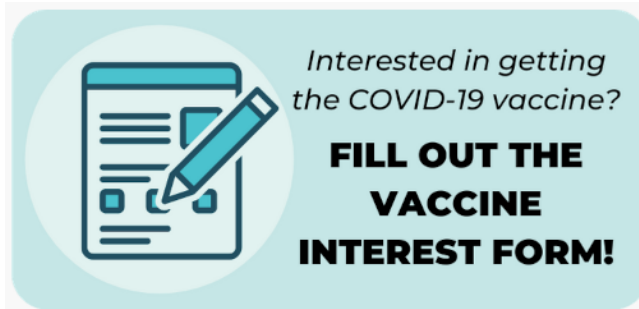
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ARE YOU WANTING TO FIND OUT HOW TO GET THE NEW COVID-19 VACCINATION?

Wyandotte County has launched an online effort to find out how many residents want the COVID-19 vaccine.



The Wyandotte County Health Department, which is currently vaccinating health care workers, has created an online form that will help show how many residents fall into each of the phases for distributing the vaccine. Counties are following timelines established by their states.

Wyandotte's new online survey is available on the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas' website: www.wycokck.org/COVID-19. If internet accessibility is a problem for you, you can call 3-1-1 (913-573-5311) for COVID information or to register.

THE BASICS ON THE COVID-19 VACCINES

Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have gone through clinical trials with tens of thousands of people. Medical trials tested adults, young and old and with different races and ethnicities. Both vaccines have been shown to be 94-95% effective with 2 doses. These vaccines do not contain any of the virus in them, so it is impossible for the vaccine to give you COVID-19.



Side effects associated with the first does of vaccine are very mild for the vast majority of people, such as pain at the injection site. After the second dose, around 10-15% of people have cold or flu-like symptoms that last for about a day. These are not harmful. They are part of the body's immune system response.

It takes time for your body to fully build up immunity after the vaccine. Your vaccine is not fully effective until 2-3 weeks after your second dose. Even after you have been vaccinated, you still need to wear a mask and practice social distancing to protect those around you. We know that the vaccine protects the person who gets vaccinated. Professionals are awaiting more data to see if they are still able to spread the virus to other people or not.

3-1-1 Call Center Expanded to Provide 24/7 Service

The Unified Government's 3-1-1 Call Center now offers 24/7 service to customers. The expansion comes in response to feedback received in the most recent county-wide customer service satisfaction survey and temporary changes to city services caused by COVID-19.

The Unified Government has contracted with Daupler, a Kansas City-based company, to receive calls that come in after normal business hours. Residents and businesses can expect their after-hours calls to be answered quickly by professional staff. Call takers have been trained to provide infor-

mation about city services, take messages for Treasury & Court staff, and dispatch personnel for Public Works emergencies.

"Public Works has contracted with Daupler for a number of years, so we're confident in their ability to handle customer inquiries that range from easy to complex," said Chad Wiggans, 3-1-1/Daupler Expanded Hours Initiative Project Manager. "We've heard what our residents and businesses have to say about making customer service a top priority, and we're excited to implement a program that will meet this need."

As a high volume of calls are directly related to the County's COVID-19 response, funding for the expansion of 24-hour service was supported by Phase I CARES Act Funding from the federal government.

Service requests may also be submitted online at mywyco.wycokck.org.



TAX DEADLINE IS APRIL 15, 2021

Homestead *WebFile* is FREE way to file Homestead claims. Like Kansas *WebFile*, refunds can be deposited directly into your bank account. Homestead *WebFile* is safe and secure. While all claim requirements must be met and information verified, filing electronically can speed up the refund process.

The Homestead Refund is a rebate program for the property taxes paid by homeowners. The refund is based on a portion of the property tax paid on a Kansas resident's home. The maximum refund is \$700. To qualify you must be a Kansas resident, living in Kansas the entire year. Your total household income must be \$36,000 or less.

You must meet one of the following requirements:

- You were born before Jan. 1, 1965; OR
- You must have been totally and permanently disabled or blind during the entire year, regardless of your age, OR
- You must have had a dependent child living with you all of last year who was born before Jan. 1, 2020, and was under the age of 18 the entire year.

SAFESR - Kansas Property Tax Relief for Low Income Seniors. SAFESR is a property tax refund program administered under the provisions of the Kansas Homestead Act (property tax refund). SAFESR is also referred to as, "Kansas Property Tax Relief for Low Income Seniors". The refund is 75% of the 2019 general property tax paid or to be paid as shown on the 2020 real estate tax statement for the residence in which the claimant lived in 2020. The 2020 property tax consists of the 1st half which is due Dec. 20, 2020 and the 2nd half which is due May 10, 2021. The 2020 property tax is the total of both the 1st and 2nd half taxes.

A claimant may receive either a Homestead or a SAFESR refund, but not both.

You must meet all of the following requirements for the SAFESR refund:

- Kansas resident all of 2020,
- Owned a home in Kansas during 2020,
- Aged 65 years or older for all of 2020 (born before Jan. 1, 1955) and
- Household income of \$20,300 or less in 2020, and House cannot be valued at more than \$350,000.

Homestead and SAFESR Refund Advancement Program

This program provides homeowners with the opportunity to apply a portion of their anticipated Homestead refund to help pay the first half of their property tax.

There is a question on both Forms K-40H and K-40PT asking the homeowner whether you want your next year's Homestead or SAFESR refund to be sent directly to your County Treasurer. If this box was checked on your 2019 form, your anticipated 2020 Homestead or SAFESR refund was sent to the County Treasurer in December 2020 to pay toward the 1st half of your 2020 property taxes due on December 20, 2020. The 2020 Homestead return must still be completed and filed no later than April 15, 2021, in order to pay back the "early" or "advanced" refund sent on the homeowner's behalf to the county in December 2020.

If you do not check this box on the 2020 for K-40H or K-40PT, you cannot participate in the Homestead advancement program and none of your 2020 Homestead or SAFESR refund will be used to pay your 2021 property taxes.

Dear Newsletter Recipient:

For years "The Communicator" has served as a vital means for providing seniors in Wyandotte County important information regarding aging news, events, programs, services and much more! The newsletter's continuity depends on your donations for its existence.

Please help us continue to provide this important publication by becoming a sponsor!

Respectfully, *The Newsletter Committee*

| | |
|-------------|---|
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| _____ \$50 | Benefactor <i>benefactor</i> |
| _____ \$25 | Patron <i>patron</i> |
| _____ \$10 | Contributor <i>contribuidor</i> |
| _____ | Other |

If you would like to contribute to the cost of the newsletter, please make checks payable to:

Wyandotte/Leavenworth AAA,
Attn: The Communicator
849 North 47th, Suite C
Kansas City, Kansas 66102

Appreciation is extended to the following who have contributed toward the cost of this newsletter.

Brenda Buckner

Names are listed in alphabetical order.

DOES EMAIL WORK FOR YOU?

By joining our email club, you'll get information before everyone else!

Send an email to:
60Plus@wycokck.org
with your request.



2021 TAX ASSISTANCE

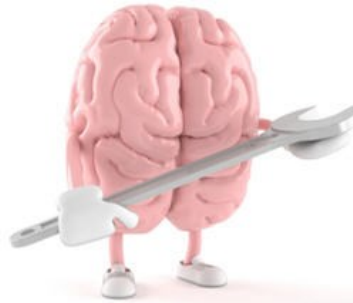
The Free AARP Tax Assistance is not currently assisting with Tax Preparation. You may call their toll-free line at 1-888-227-7669 for updates.

If you are simply needing assistance with the **Kansas Homestead only** and you are a senior (60 years of age or older), residing in Wyandotte County, you may contact the UG Clerk's Office at 913-573-5260 for assistance.

BRAIN MAKEOVER: A Holistic Approach To Brain Health

Information provided by www.parentgiving.com

There is no "magic pill" for your brain. It is part of a whole ecosystem that includes your body and all your surroundings - that means the artificial flavors, dyes and additives in



your favorite junk food and the chemicals in the hair spray you just inhaled. Your brain is only 2 percent of your bodyweight, yet consumes 20 percent of the body's glucose. How to feed and care for it? Try these tips:

Avoid chemicals as much as possible. The more your

house and office are "clean and green" the better your brain will work.

Drink water. Energy drinks and sports drinks with all their sugar and dyes don't count. Dehydration actually causes brain damage. Drink at least 8 to 10 glasses a day.

Eat fresh fruits and vegetables. The best ones have the highest antioxidant value: blueberries, blackberries, cranberries, strawberries, spinach, brussels sprouts, plums, broccoli, avocados, red grapes, bell peppers, cherries and kiwi.

Eat eggs. Eggs are rich in choline, a fat-like B vitamin. Studies have shown that it increases memory and chases away fatigue.

Get exercise. Greater blood circulation means more oxygen to the brain and more production of mood-enhancing endorphins.

Meditate. Meditation changes brain frequency and function. The frequencies of deep meditation allow "brain rest" you cannot get anywhere else. Meditation also enhances connection and symmetry between the right and left hemispheres of the brain.

If a holistic approach is a radical departure from your current lifestyle choices, pick just one or two to adopt and progress from there.



DID YOU KNOW?

Just for Fun!

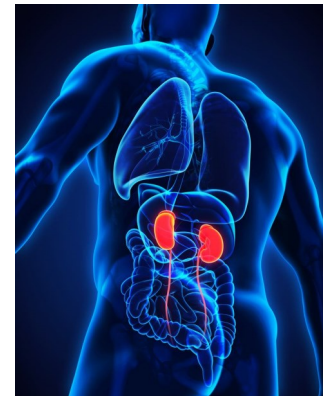
Did you know that goldfish can see both infrared and ultraviolet light?

- ◆ Did you know that an ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain?
- ◆ Did you know that all insects have 6 legs?
- ◆ Did you know that frogs cannot swallow with their eyes open?
- ◆ Did you know a duck can't walk without bobbing its head?
- ◆ Did you know that dragonflies have 6 legs, but cannot walk?
- ◆ Did you know that a crocodile can't move its tongue?
- ◆ Did you know cows don't have upper front teeth?
- ◆ Did you know that a group of kangaroos is called a mob?
- ◆ Did you know that giraffes and rats can last longer without water than a camel?
- ◆ Did you know that only female mosquitos bite?
- ◆ Did you know gorillas sleep 14 hours a day?
- ◆ Did you know the lifespan of a squirrel is 9 years?
- ◆ Did you know that African elephants only have four teeth?
- ◆ Did you know a sharks top speed is 70kmh (44mph)?

MARCH IS KIDNEY MONTH

The Functions of Kidneys - The kidneys are two bean shaped organs that extract waste from blood, balance body fluids, form urine and aid in other important functions of the body. They reside in the upper abdominal cavity, against the back muscles, opposite each other on either side of the spine. To make room for the liver, the right kidney is a little lower than the left. Our kidneys serve multiple functions. Some of the main functions include:

- ◆ **Waste excretion:** The kidneys filter out toxins, excess salts, glucose and urea, which is the waste created by metabolism.
- ◆ **Water level balancing:** As water intake decreases, the kidneys adjust accordingly and leave water in the body instead of excreting it.
- ◆ **Regulates blood pressure:** The kidneys need constant blood pressure to filter the blood. When blood pressure drops too low, the kidneys send a signal to constrict blood vessels, increasing pressure. They also signal the body when it needs to retain sodium.
- ◆ **Regulates red blood cells:** When the kidneys don't get enough oxygen, they produce a hormone that stimulates the bone marrow to produce more oxygen-carrying red blood cells.
- ◆ **Acidity regulation:** As cells metabolize, they produce acids. Also, the foods we eat can alter the body's acidity. The kidneys help maintain a healthy acidity level.



Our kidneys are vital to our physical health and well being.

Injuries, conditions and diseases that affect kidney functions

deserve medical attention. In general, kidney failure can be either acute or chronic.

Acute renal failure is the sudden loss of the kidney's ability to filter waste from the bloodstream. It can be due to a direct injury or an obstruction. Although the condition can be life-threatening, it can also be reversible with prompt medical attention.

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a condition where the kidneys' ability to filter waste from the bloodstream becomes worse over time, generally over a period of years. While also life threatening, interventions can slow the process.

The loss of kidney function in CKD is typically measured in stages. Starting at "Stage 1" which is near normal kidney function, stages progress as the disease progresses. "State 5" is also called end-stage renal failure, requiring kidney dialysis or a kidney transplant.

Kidney dialysis is a medical procedure for performing many of the functions that the kidneys would perform. It is not a cure for CKD, but a life sustaining replacement for what the kidneys are no longer able to do.

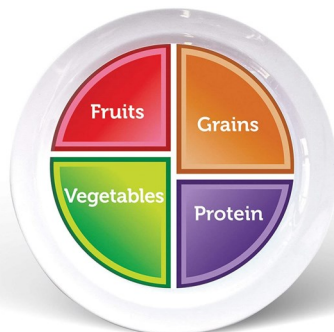
Risk factors for developing Chronic Kidney Disease

Adults with diabetes or high blood pressure have a higher risk of developing CKD. Approximately 1 of 3 adults with diabetes and 1 of 5 adults with high blood pressure has CKD. Other risk factors for CKD include cardiovascular disease, obesity, high cholesterol, lupus and a family history of CKD.

Your risk of developing CKD also increases with age, as these risk factors are more common at older age. Men with CKD are 50% more likely than women to have kidney failure.

What you eat matters

Lifestyle choices make a difference for pre-kidney disease. What one chooses to eat is a lifestyle choice.



If you have been diagnosed with CKD, a special diet may be prescribed that makes it easier for the kidneys to do their job. Even with dialysis, adhering to a prescribed diet will significantly affect the benefits derived from the treatment and one's quality of life.

If you have CKD and do not have a special diet, or even if you do not have Chronic Kidney Disease, a good lifestyle choice is to follow the guidelines of Choose MyPlate.

CORONAVIRUS RELIEF SCAM IMPERSONATES JOE SIMONS FROM THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

www.consumer.ftc.gov



Scammers are at it again, pretending to be from a government agency to rip people off. Here is what you need to know about the latest coronavirus relief fund scam.

You get an email that looks to be from Joe Simons of the Federal Trade Commission. It says you are getting coronavirus relief money. The email includes a face certificate to make you think the money is real.

If you reply, they say you have to pay taxes before you get your money. They may include a fake letter from the IRS, like this one, to convince you.



If you pay, they say you must pay the State Department for the certificate that proves the funds are not related to any terrorist activity and the money is cleared for you to receive (Yes, really!)"

Finally, if you pay that, they send you a fake remittance order showing that the money is on the way to your bank account.



As you might have suspected by now, the money never shows up. That's because every step of the way was carried out by scammers

looking to steal your money. So, what can you do to protect yourself against imposters when their stories keep changing?

- Be suspicious of any call, email, text or letter from a government agency asking for money or information. Government agencies don't call you with threats or promises of - or demands for - money. Scammers do.
- Don't trust caller ID - it can be faked. Even if it might look like a real call from a real government agency, don't trust it.
- NEVER pay with a gift card or wire transfer. If someone tells you to pay this way, it's a scam.
- Check with the real agency. Look up their number. Call them to find out if they're trying to reach you and why.

If you look up Joe Simons, you'll see that he is the Chairman of the FTC. But Joe didn't email you. Scammers pretending to be Joe did.

Here's another sign this is a scam: The FTC is not involved in distributing coronavirus economic stimulus money in any way. Economic stimulus payments come from the IRS. The IRS won't contact you by phone, email, text message or social media with information about any payments related to the coronavirus pandemic, or to ask you for personal or financial information. Check out irs.gov/coronavirus for the latest info about coronavirus relief payments.

If you get an email that says you're getting some money, don't reply, period. And definitely don't give them your bank account or other financial information. Report it to the FTC at ReportFraud.ftc.gov or by dialing 1-877-FTC-HELP.



UPCOMING FILING DEADLINES

Senior Citizens Utility Tax Rebates - ends March 31, 2021

Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) - ends March 31, 2021

Tax Filing Deadline - ends April 15, 2021

SPRING CLEANING TIPS FOR SENIORS

Spring is known as the season of fresh starts. It's no wonder that for many, spring cleaning is a yearly tradition. While doing chores may not sound very exciting, spring cleaning actually has many benefits. In fact, a clean home can help reduce allergies, increase happiness, and improve concentration.

As the weather turns warmer, take the time to get your home organized and tidy. Here are five simple spring cleaning tips for seniors:

- **Do a little bit each day.** Spring cleaning doesn't have to be done all in one day. Take your time and tackle one task each day. Spreading it out will make spring cleaning feel less overwhelming. Plus, seeing your results from even small projects, like cleaning out a spare bedroom closet, can help motivate you to do more.
- **Don't forget your medicine cabinets.** Unused or expired medications can clutter your cabinets. Plus, they increase the risk that you or a loved one could mistakenly take the wrong medication. Gather up any medications that are no longer necessary or expired—this includes both prescription and over-the-counter drugs. But don't just throw them away! Instead, look for local take-back programs or simply take your unneeded medications to any local pharmacy who will dispose of them safely.
- **Check your smoke detectors, carbon dioxide detectors & fire extinguishers.** Make sure you have fresh batteries in your smoke and carbon dioxide detectors and that they are properly functioning. Also take the time to check the expiration on your fire extinguishers. If it has expired, replace it promptly. Look for smaller models that fit nicely in a cabinet or closet and are easier for seniors to manage.
- **Prioritize getting rid of clutter.** You've likely accumulated a lot over the years. Decluttering not only helps free up space, but studies show it can also ease feelings of stress, decrease anxiety and relieve insomnia. Spring cleaning is the perfect time to get rid of items you no longer need or want. Sort your belongings into three piles—keep, donate or trash.
- **Enlist the help of family and friends.** Don't feel like you have to take on your spring cleaning projects alone. Instead, reach out to family and friends for help. Not only will it get the job done faster, but it may actually make completing these chores more fun for everyone.



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS

Daylight Savings will begin **Sunday, March 14, 2021**. Daylight Savings in the U.S. starts on the second Sunday in March of each year and ends the first Sunday in November.

It goes into effect each spring when clocks are moved forward by one hour at 2:00am standard time, and the time becomes 3:00am daylight savings time (DST). When DST ends in the fall, the clock is moved back to 3am and the time becomes 1:00am standard time.

Hence the saying, "Spring Forward, Fall Back!"



EASY BAKE FISH

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 tablespoons honey
- 3 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 4 (6 ounce) salmon steaks
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper

DIRECTIONS:

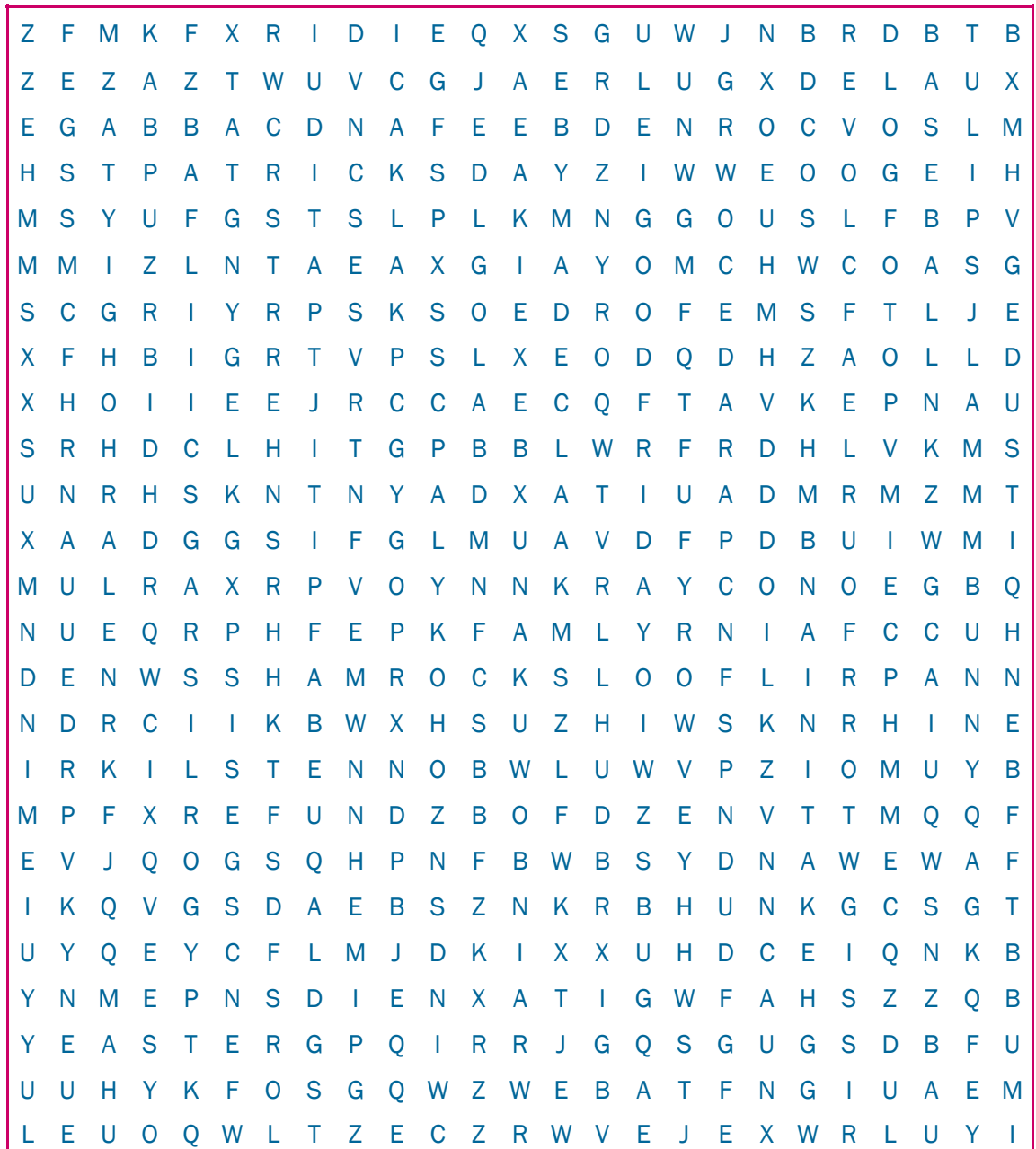
- 1) Preheat oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C).
- 2) In a small bowl, mix honey, mustard and lemon juice. Spread the mixture over the salmon steaks. Season with pepper. Arrange in a medium baking dish.
- 3) Bake 20 minutes in the preheated oven, or until fish easily flakes with a fork.



SPRING IS COMING

Find and circle all the words hidden in the grid.

- APRIL FOOLS
- ASH WEDNESDAY
- BASEBALL
- BASKET
- BEADS
- BEER
- BONNETS
- BUNNY
- CHICKS
- CORNED BEEF AND CABBAGE
- DAFFODILS
- EASTER
- EGGHUNT
- EGGS
- FOUR LEAF CLOVER
- GOOD FRIDAY
- GREEN
- KITES
- LEPRECHAUN
- LUCK OF THE IRISH
- MARDI GRAS
- PARADE
- PASTELS
- POT OF GOLD
- RAINBOW
- REFUND
- ROBINS
- SHAMROCK
- SHOWERS
- SPRING
- SPRING CLEANING
- ST. PATRICKS DAY
- TAX DAY
- TULIPS
- UNCLE SAM
- WIND



Wyandotte/Leavenworth

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MARCH >>>

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS BEGINS

Sunday, March 14, 2021

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Wednesday, March 17, 2021

AARP TAX LINE

1-866-227-7669

Contact AARP to check if assistance is available.



The Communicator is published bi-monthly by the Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging. It is funded by the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services through the Older Americans' Act. We assume no responsibility for the care and return of unsolicited material. Donations are suggested.

The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age national origin, sex, or handicap.

If you feel you have been discriminated against, you may file a complaint with the Kansas Department for Aging & Disability Services at 1-800-432-3535.

Linda Ramirez, Editor

APRIL >>>

SPRING HOLIDAY

Friday, April 2, 2021

Unified Government Offices Closed

EASTER

Sunday, April 4, 2021

TAX DEADLINE

Thursday, April 15, 2021

EARTH DAY

Thursday, April 22, 2021

ARBOR DAY

Friday, April 30, 2021