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AREA 9 AGENCY RELEASES TIPS TO HELP SENIOR HOMEOWNERS WEATHER THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

Seniors living on fixed incomes are struggling to pay for necessities like prescription drugs and food while unsafe living conditions are neglected; Area 9 In-Home and Community Services Agency releases "Home Safety to Prevent Injury" Tips to help families address safety issues with older relatives during the holidays…

Area 9 In-Home and Community Services Agency, in coordination with the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging and Rebuilding Together, released a "Home for the Holidays" brochure today to assist senior homeowners weather the current economic crisis that has squeezed the pocket books of so many older adults in Fayette, Franklin, Rush, Union and Wayne Counties. Thousands of older adults in this five-county area live on fixed incomes and have seen a large percentage of their retirement funds disappear over the last year, leaving them short on funds to pay for day-to-day necessities like food, heat, and prescription drugs. Meanwhile, the homes of many older adults are being neglected, leaving seniors in unsafe environments which can lead to life-threatening situations, such as falls in their homes. According to the Home Safety Council, falls are the leading cause of home injury death among older adults, accounting for 52.5% of all home injury deaths for adults between the ages of 65 and 74. And yet, falls are often preventable with the proper information and simple, inexpensive home modifications.

The "Preventing Falls at Home" brochure released today provides families with a checklist of important items to assess in the home that can prevent falls, including stairway rails, non-slip strips in showers and bathrooms, proper lighting, flooring safety issues and other fall hazards to avoid. In our area, there are low or no-interest loans, tax credits and other programs for home modifications for those who are older or disabled. Area 9 Agency can direct consumers to a variety of resources for assessing the safety of a home and making the appropriate modifications to prevent falls. To view a copy of the brochure, go to www.n4a.org/elresources (also available in .pdf format at www.eldercare.gov) and for more information on resources in Fayette, Franklin, Rush, Union or Wayne Counties, contact Area 9 Agency at 966-1795 or 1-800-458-9345.

"The current economic crisis has left many older adults on fixed incomes in a difficult position just keeping up with paying bills," said Tony Shepherd, Executive Director, "so the thought of installing a hand rail in the shower or repairing an uneven walkway is often last on the priority list, yet it can save older adults from serious, sometimes debilitating injuries. This holiday season, we encourage American families to have a frank discussion with older relatives about the safety of their home environments. There are simple and inexpensive solutions that can prevent fall injuries -- the time to act is now."

The ”Preventing Falls at Home” brochure is part of a national effort to encourage home assessment and repairs during the holiday season. Over 900 aging network organizations are involved in the holiday campaign that was launched by the Eldercare Locator, a public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging.

For more information on resources available in other communities, contact the Eldercare Locator at 800.677.1116 or www.eldercare.gov. For home modifications, contact Rebuilding Together at 800.473.4229 or www.rebuildingtogether.org.