

**Executive Summary of the Creative Aging Advisory Committee
2013 Livable Community Survey of Lincoln County Residents Ages 50+**

The Creative Aging Advisory Committee (CAAC) is an outgrowth of the Creative Aging Course taught at Eastern New Mexico University-Ruidoso (ENMU) as a community education course by Clara Farah, Ph.D. Alumni of her classes and other interested individuals make up its membership.

The CAAC believed there was a need to assess the multiple and diverse Lincoln County communities to determine how its residents, ages 50+, view the livability issues that make up quality of life for seniors. Surveys developed by the World Health Organization, the American Association of Retired Persons, as well as those from other organizations were reviewed. The resulting CAAC survey was distributed through senior centers, libraries, and other public facilities. The survey was publicized on radio programs and in the local newspaper. In addition, it was available on the ENMU website for on-line completion.

The survey was divided into seven domains: (1) Community Features (including housing, outdoor spaces and building, transportation and roads); (2) County Health Services; (3) Social Activities and Inclusion; (4) Volunteering and Civic Engagement; (5) Employment Opportunities; (6) Communication and Information; and (7) the Demographics of those completing the survey. Each domain had a number of questions, and each question had two parts: first, "How important is it to have this in Lincoln County?" and second, "Does it exist in Lincoln County?"

Of Lincoln County's 20,497 residents, as reported in the 2010 US Census, 10,034 were identified as age 50+. Four hundred and one (401) residents ages 50+ completed the survey, comprising four percent (4%) of the age 50+ county residents. This is a statistically reliable sample. Eighty-nine percent (89%) who responded are year round residents of Lincoln County; while seventy-nine percent (79%) view Lincoln County as a good or excellent place to live as they grow old. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of those who responded have lived in Lincoln County for eight years or more.

There was often a significant variance between "How important is to have this in Lincoln County?" and "Does [that thing] exist in Lincoln County?" A few examples:

- 92 % said that Public Transportation is Important or Very Important to have, but only 23% said yes, it exists in the county.
- 99% said that Affordable Long-Term Health Care is Important or Very Important to have, but only 23% said it exists in the county.
- 95% said that Job Opportunities for people ages 50+ are Important or Very Important, but only 25% said it exists in the county.
- 98% said that Affordable Housing for Varying Incomes is Important or Very Important, but only 25% said it exists in the county.

These are only a few examples of significant variances found when reviewing the survey results; along with the others, they should be considered "red flags." All warrant further study and possible action.

While all domains have impact, some were found to be critical to the livability in Lincoln County for those in its aging population. Although the survey focuses on our 50+ population, the issues that surfaced are relevant to and impact residents of all ages in Lincoln County.