

SENIOR
NEWSLETTER



What's Inside

- Staying Connected During the Holidays
- Winter Safety on the Road and at Home
- Emergency Meal Delivery

EXPANDING DIGITAL ACCESS

New Computer Labs Available

Christmas came early for three senior centers throughout the region. Area I Agency on Aging is excited to announce the delivery of computer labs to Hysham, Forsyth, and Wibaux. Including Jordan's lab delivered earlier this year, four centers now have new, complete computer labs available for their members.

These labs are part of our technology-expansion efforts made possible by a grant from the Town

Pump Charitable Foundation which was secured through an application submitted by Area I Agency on Aging. After the grant was awarded, senior centers across our region were then invited to apply for the funds.

Hysham, Forsyth and Wibaux all demonstrated strong commitment to offering ongoing digital access for their members, and all three were selected. We are proud to support seniors with the tools they need to stay informed, connected, and confident in today's digital world. We hope area seniors will take full advantage of the computer labs and dive into the excitement they can offer!

STAYING CONNECTED THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Simple Ways to Keep In Touch - Near or Far

The holiday season is a time for togetherness, but distance, weather, or travel challenges can sometimes make it difficult for families to gather in person. Fortunately, today's technology offers simple ways to stay close—even when miles apart.



Video calls, email, online greeting cards, and photo sharing can help you stay in touch with children, grandchildren, and friends throughout the winter months. And if you'd like to learn how, your local senior computer lab is the perfect place to start.

The new labs in Wibaux, Hysham and Forsyth (as well as the earlier lab in Jordan) are available for seniors who want to practice connecting virtually, learn new skills, or get hands-on help. Whether you want to join a family video chat, send a holiday message, or view photos from loved ones, these labs make it easier than ever. This season, we hope every senior can enjoy meaningful moments—whether in person or through the screen.

PREPARING FOR HOLIDAY TRAVEL

Staying Safe During Unpredictable Weather

Sometimes, even when there are plans to get together for the holidays, Montana's weather may have other ideas. As we well know, our winters can be unpredictable and make travel hazardous at times. Being prepared is the safest way to ensure the holidays remain a joyous event.

Make sure your vehicle is winter-ready: check your tires, battery, antifreeze, and windshield wipers. Always **keep a winter survival kit in your car**, including blankets, water, snacks, a flashlight, a phone charger, and extra medications if you rely on them. **Let someone know your travel route** and expected arrival time, and **check road reports** before leaving.

If conditions look hazardous, it's okay to delay travel until roads improve. **Your safety comes first.** A little preparation can go a long way toward ensuring a safe, stress-free holiday season for you and your loved ones.

GIVING WINTER THE ATTENTION IT DESERVES

Staying Safe While Staying Home

If you're not planning to travel this holiday season, you may avoid the stress of icy roads and long-distance driving—but winter hazards don't stop at the front door. Extreme cold, ice, and potential power outages make being prepared a must for eastern Montanans.

Keep Your Home Warm & Safe

Make sure your furnace or primary heat source is working properly. Use space heaters carefully, keeping them away from anything flammable. Seal drafts around windows or doors to help your home stay warm during cold snaps.

Prevent Slips & Falls

Winter is prime time for falls. Keep walkways and steps clear when possible, and use ice melt or sand for traction. Place non-slip mats near entryways and wear shoes with good grip, even for short trips outside.

Prepare for Power Outages

Storms can knock out power unexpectedly. Keep flashlights handy, charge phones ahead of time, and have extra blankets available. A small supply of shelf-stable food and medications is helpful if you can't get out for a few days.

Stay Connected

Check in with family, friends, or neighbors during storms. And if you'd like to stay connected virtually, your local senior computer lab can help you learn email, video calling, and other simple online tools.

Home Safety Checklist

- ☐ Furnace/heat source inspected
- ☐ Carbon monoxide & smoke detectors working
- ☐ Flashlights with fresh batteries
- ☐ Extra blankets & warm layers
- ☐ Stocked pantry and medications
- ☐ Ice melt or sand available
- ☐ Non-slip entry mats in place
- ☐ Emergency contact list updated
- ☐ Charged phone and charger accessible
- ☐ Someone who can check on you during storms

EMERGENCY MEALS

Safeguarding Your Nutrition

Richland County Commission on Aging is making it easy for some seniors to keep those recommended emergency meals on hand. Volunteers from the RCCOA recently delivered three shelf-stable emergency meals to all of their home-delivered meal clients. These meals are provided each year to ensure seniors have something safe and nutritious to eat if winter weather, icy roads, or another emergency prevents their regular meal delivery.



Each box contains items that do not require refrigeration and can be safely stored for several months. RCCOA chose to use Miss Olive's ready-made meals; available on Amazon for less than \$20 for three meals. RCCOA asks that clients save these meals strictly for emergency situations (not for everyday use) so they will be available when truly needed.



If a client must use one or more of their emergency meals, RCCOA encourages them to let their office know right away so replacements can be delivered. Ensuring that every senior has backup meals on hand is an important part of keeping our communities safe during Montana's harsh winter months.

BUILD YOUR OWN EMERGENCY MEALS

MAKE YOUR
OWN MEAL

SHELF STABLE

BE PREPARED

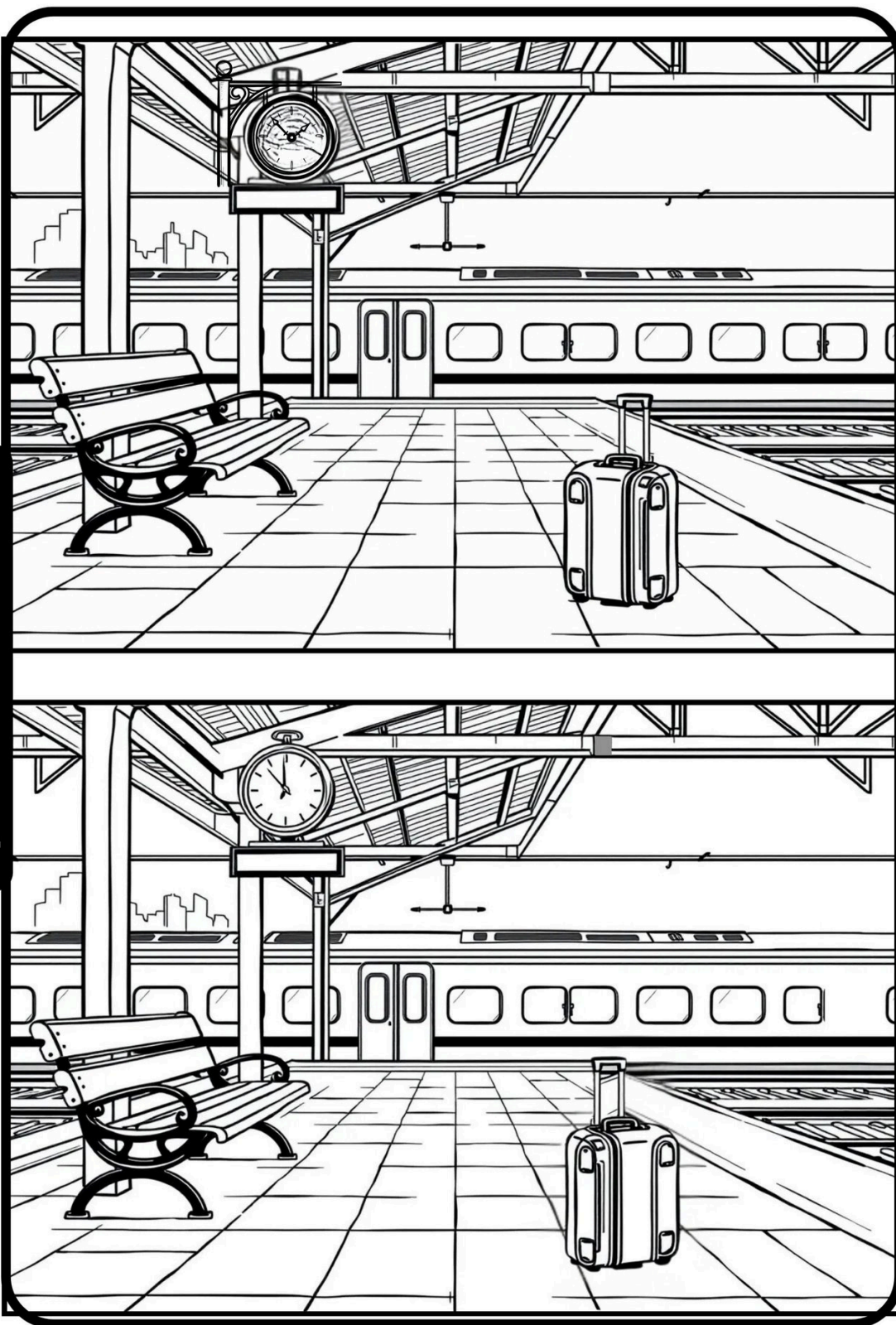
If you like the idea of having emergency meals on hand, it is easy to build your own. Here are a few items off the shelf that work well:

- Canned tuna, chicken, or turkey
- Canned fruits and vegetables
- Canned chili, stew, or soup (pull-tab can preferred)
- Protein or meal-replacement shakes (Ensure, Boost, etc.)
- Dried fruits (raisins, cranberries, apples, etc.)
- Instant oatmeal packets
- Granola bars
- Bottled water

YOUR DECEMBER BRAIN GAME

Keep your mind sharp! Brain games help improve memory, focus, and problem-solving skills—plus they're fun! A little daily mental exercise goes a long way in staying mentally healthy as you age.

Spot 5 Differences





'Tis the Season

A special heartfelt greeting from all of us here at Area I Agency on Aging.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. May 2026 bring you health, happiness and endless blessings!

Merry Christmas

November Sudoku Solution

6	5	2	9	1	3	7	8	4
8	3	1	4	2	7	9	6	5
9	7	4	5	8	6	1	2	3
3	8	6	1	4	9	2	5	7
7	2	5	6	3	8	4	1	9
1	4	9	7	5	2	8	3	6
5	1	3	2	7	4	6	9	8
4	9	8	3	6	1	5	7	2
2	6	7	8	9	5	3	4	1

More puzzles are available monthly at:
<https://www.aemt.org/programs/aging>



Open Enrollment Reminder Time Is Running Out

There's still a little time to check your Medicare Part D plan or make changes to your Medicare Advantage plan. Open enrollment runs until December 7th. If you haven't taken advantage of this important period, contact your local SHIP counselor today!

If you need a list of available SHIP Counselors, please contact Area I Agency on Aging at (800) 227-0703.