

Emergency 'Lifeline' Program Considered By County Retired Persons Group

BY TERRY KOCH
CANTON — The St. Lawrence County Chapter of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) is considering establishment of a pioneering county-wide emergency response system.

Systems of the kind AARP has in mind go by names like "Lifeline" and "Link To Life," and involve an instant telephone hookup between an individual and an emergency center like a hospital.

There is only one operating between Syracuse and Plattsburgh now, at E. J. Noble Hospital in Gouverneur.

The hospital's system involves a wrist attachment; an automatic home telephone-dialer; and, at the hospital itself, a computerized "emergency response center."

If the client — an elderly person living alone, or a youthful heart patient, for example — were to fall at home, a button on the wrist unit is triggered. That in turn sets off the automatic dialer, which dials the hospital.

At the hospital, a computerized monitor flashes the number of the client in trouble. A nurse calls that home, and if there is no response, then calls persons who have volunteered to assist the client in trouble.

"Very Enthusiastic" — "It's something we're very enthusiastic about for the not-too-distant future," said Ed Pierce, Canton, of St. Lawrence County AARP.

But he stressed that the group is "merely investigating" the possibility now.

The county AARP chapter, he said, has toured the Gouverneur E. J. Noble Hospital facility, which uses the so-called "Lifeline" system.

And this Wednesday, at 1 p.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church in Potsdam, the group will hear a presentation from a representative of the "Link To Life" firm.

AARP is inviting anyone who is interested, "especially the elderly," to attend.

The group, said Pierce, would probably prefer to operate in connection with a hospital in such a project than to become involved in the "911" controversy by attempting some non-hospital center.

"Phenomenal" — "We hope they (the AARP) would attempt to contact us again," said Robert Marzella, administrative assistant at E. J. Noble Hospital of Gouverneur.

The hospital has been operating with the system since late September,

and Marzella describes the program as "phenomenal."

Two emergencies were handled through the program in late December, Marzella said.

In one instance, he noted, it was a heart patient who was subsequently rushed to the hospital and remains there; in another case, a man in his 80s had fallen "and could not get up," Marzella said.

"His responder (the volunteer who takes calls from the emergency center) came and helped him out," said Marzella.

The administrative assistant said the hospital has gotten "a lot of support from organizations in town," which have helped by raising money.

Mrs. Sanford Wants Audit Of D.A. Gardner's Renovations

BY JIM REAGEN
CANTON — Rosemary Sanford (R-Potsdam), a member of the St. Lawrence County Legislature's Audit Committee, plans to launch an audit of District Attorney Charles Gardner's recent office renovations that were begun over the New Year's holidays.

is at no expense to county taxpayers, he said.

Mrs. Sanford said her major concern is that the county legislature should be informed about such projects before they are begun.

She said legislators should have been given a chance to decide whether the office needed renovation work.

Over the past several years, the county legislature's two member audit committee has met few times.

But Mrs. Sanford, as a member of the panel, said she expects it to become a much more active panel, conducting surprise reviews of county departments to see how county employees are spending county taxpayers' money.

Mrs. Sanford, a member of the GOP minority on the legislature, was appointed to audit, personnel, planning and conservation, and as chairman of the insurance and purchasing committee.

For the last two years, under the Republicans, Mrs. Sanford served on more legislative committees than any other legislator, including the powerful finance committee.

But with the new Democratic majority, Mrs. Sanford's legislative clout on the board was reduced through her appointments to less important panels.

But Mrs. Sanford said she has no regrets about the committee assignments because she believes the audit committee will give her an opportunity to keep tabs on numerous county departments, and their use of taxpayer funds.

"I think this could be very interesting," she said.

"I think the taxpayers have a right to know how much it cost and where the money came from," Mrs. Sanford said.

Mrs. Sanford said the decision to spend over \$3,000 on the renovation of the office was never reviewed by a legislative committee before county buildings and grounds staff were assigned to work over a holiday weekend on the project.

Mrs. Sanford said the funds to pay for the renovations apparently came from the county's buildings and grounds department budget.

"Last year that department did not have enough money in its budget to cover its expenses for the entire year," she said. "I'd like to find out whether we're going to run into that problem again this year."

Gardner said the work in the D.A.'s office was long overdue. He said buildings and grounds superintendent Richard Ashley did a "terrific job" on the office.

Brought Own Furniture

Gardner also points out that he brought in office equipment and furnishings of his own to the office, rather than asking the county to pick up the tab for refurbishing his office.

Gardner also said he brought in his own personal computer to the District Attorney's office to allow him to computerize the office, and to allow him and his staff to keep better track of criminal cases pending.

The use of the computer in the office

Talented Juniors Complete Courses

CANTON — St. Lawrence University has presented certificates to 94 students from ten North County high schools for successful completion of course work in the university's Talented High School Juniors program for the fall 1983 semester.

Under the program, now in its 19th year, selected high school students enroll in advanced study on the SLU campus. Courses included Computers; Introduction To Acting; Development of Human Behavior; Creative Darkroom Techniques; Introduction To Dance and Economics Of Human Behavior.

Students from the following area schools received certificates: MADRID-WASHINGTON — April Beckstead, Angie Bissell, Tina Caswell, Trudy Caswell, Dinna Dean, Robert Ryan, Lisa Wright.

NORWOOD-NORFOLK — Kelli Clark, Belinda Demo, Duana Dean, Heather Falcone, Dale Felix, Michelle Felix, Chris LePage, Karen McKenna, Michelle Monroe, Theresa Ryan, Suzanne Wilson.

PARISHVILLE-HOPKINTON — Cathy Adstitt, Gwen LeBeau, Becky Meashaw, Lori Michaud.

POTSDAM — Mary Bondello, Beth Carl, Paul Chapple, Janet Dshav, Margaret Gibbs, Jane Juno, David Kaczka, Karen Kirchgasser, Derek Knapp, Donna Mitchell, Mark Nunge, Ingrid Tischer, John Tyler, Matt Vaska, Paul Vaska, Penny Welland.

ST. REGIS FALLS — Michelle Smith, Greg Tessier.

Towns' Projects Or Business Loans: County's Dilemma

CANTON — St. Lawrence County's new legislature is facing a tough choice on whether the county should help several rural towns obtain help for badly needed water and sewer projects or whether the county should try to spur economic development and new jobs.

It's a touchy issue for the legislators, especially because the decision on how to apply for federal

Community Development Block Grant funds, will affect numerous individual towns, some represented by GOP legislators, and others represented by Democrats.

The problem involves HUD's CDBG program, a federal funding system that allows the county to apply for up to \$750,000 in federal aid. But legislators are finding that they have to choose whether to apply for funds to help several rural communities that need new water and sewer facilities but can not afford them, or whether they should apply for funds to help local businesses.

The issue arose last week when the county planning office and the county office of economic development found they were both considering applying for the same grant.

The economic development office is may apply for a \$750,000 grant to aid several businesses that are considering whether or not to expand.

Under the plan, the county would lend the businesses the money at low interest rates. When the \$750,000 was paid back over time, it would allow the county to have a revolving economic development fund to spur small business growth.

A Tough Question — "I think it's going to be a very tough question," said legislature finance committee chairman Betty Bradley (D-Potsdam).

"Some of these communities have projects they need very badly," she said. "On the other hand, economic development projects are very attractive to the county."

HEAVY LADEN — Evergreen branches are bearing a heavy burden of snow as January brings new snowfalls to the North Country. (Helen Condon photo)



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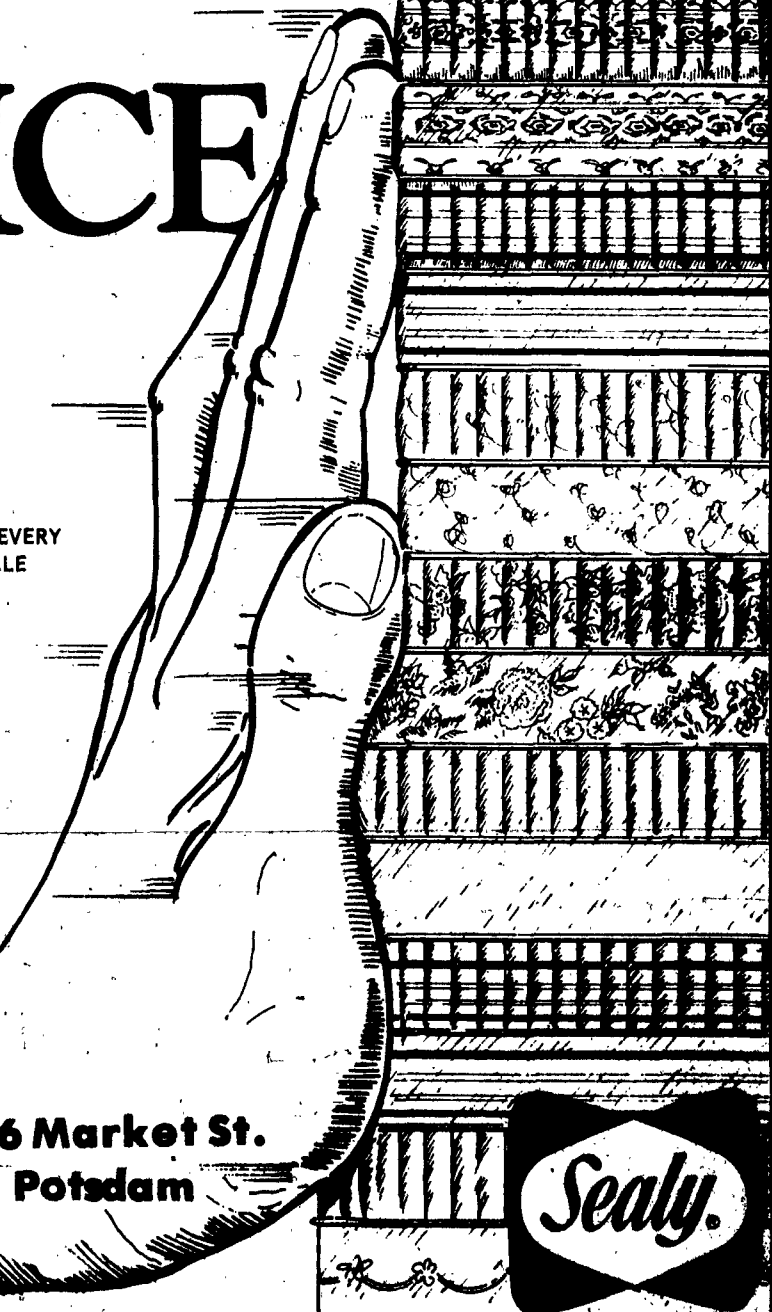
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