

Making sure loved ones are prepared for their retirement years

What if a sudden, debilitating illness, fraud or economic downturn affected your senior family member's retirement, estate or long-term care issues? Would you be prepared to take over?

If the answer is no, you're not alone. According to 2013 research (<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/07/18/as-population-ages-more-americans-becoming-caregivers/>) from the Pew Research Center, four in 10 U.S. adults are caring for a loved one with significant health issues.

Don't wait for a crisis to initiate this conversation. Starting early can help you plan and even safeguard your own career and retirement planning. Here are some suggestions for starting the conversation:

- Identify the missing links. Find information gaps you need to fill to help your senior relative plan for retirement. If key financial information — investment and banking accounts, legal documents or doctors' contact information — is missing, list any and all unknowns to be researched and compiled.

- Schedule a family financial meeting. Schedule a specific day and time and create an agenda that meets the needs of your senior relative. It is not always necessary to involve all direct family members in a preliminary discussion, but make sure that relevant individuals are aware of the meeting. After helping your senior relative assess his or her financial situation, make sure to identify next steps and responsibilities.

- Locate important financial documents. Ask your senior relative to show you where his or her key documents and accounts are, such as retirement and pension information, checkbooks, investment statements, insurance policies and legal and



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estate data. Find out where incoming bills are kept in case you have to step in and help manage monthly bills.

- Consider seeking financial counseling. Any number of reasons, from illness to fraud, may explain losing control of personal finances. If your relative has been working with a qualified financial or tax adviser, the family team should consider meeting with him or her if a need arises. If outside tax, financial or legal help is needed, the team and your senior relative should discuss who those professionals should be, what their fees are and what you expect them to do.

- Make and agree on a plan. After all the information gathering and discussion is complete, make a plan — in writing, if possible — to review the senior's wishes, set an action plan and assign responsibilities as necessary. As mentioned above, you should review this plan every year. And if problems emerge in any topic area from retirement to health issues, you'll find guidance throughout the Practical Money Skills for Life website. (<http://www.practicalmoneyskills.com/personalfinance/>)

Bottom line: Asking older relatives about retirement, estate and long-term care preparations can be an uncomfortable conversation. Making a plan and initiating early conversations to involve the right people can ease the financial strain and stress on everyone involved.

— Jason Alderman directs Visa's financial education programs. To follow Jason Alderman on Twitter: www.twitter.com/PracticalMoney

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MAEGAN MURRAY PHOTO

People from all over the region traveled to Hermiston this weekend to attend the winter horse sale at the Umatilla County Fairgrounds.

Dozens travel from all over region to sell, buy horses

BY MAEGAN MURRAY
HERMISTON HERALD

As soon as Kylie and Mary McElligott could sit on a saddle, they were riding horses on their family farm, the McElligott Ranch in Ione.

The sisters said they need to ride to help out around their family's farm, but mostly they ride for fun.

Mary McElligott said they learned how to ride bareback because they weren't allowed to ride their horses until they could saddle the large animals, themselves.

"That's how we learned," she said. "That's now our favorite way to ride."

Kylie McElligott, 21, and Mary McElligott, 20, now work full time on their family's farm and attend horse auctions with their family, like Saturday's Horse Sale Extravaganza at the Umatilla County Fairgrounds.

Kylie McElligott said she now owns three horses, while Mary McElligott owns one. At their family's ranch, however, they have about 25 horses, altogether, they said. As they have gotten older, they have had more opportunities to help their family find the horses they need to manage their ranch.

On Saturday, the McElligott sisters were looking for a horse for their father to use on the farm.

"We want something young," Kylie McElligott



MAEGAN MURRAY PHOTO

Kylie and Mary McElligott watch the Hermiston horse sale Saturday afternoon at the Umatilla County Fairgrounds. The sisters were looking for a horse for their father to use on their family ranch in Ione.

said. "We want something for roping, that kind of stuff."

When looking for a horse on which to bid, Kylie McElligott said age is a big factor, but so are other things including correctness — the horse's structural soundness. She said they want to make sure they buy something strong, healthy and ready to work on their farm.

More than 500 horses were sold to interested buyers Saturday, and, of the people selling the horses, many said they want their horses to show their best attributes.

Ted and Jackie Cupp, of Caldwell, Idaho, said they have attended the horse sale in Hermiston every year for the past 35 years and have probably sold close to 500 horses in that time. The

key to selling a horse for the most money, Ted Cupp said, is demonstrating the animal is healthy and gentle.

"Gentle is the biggest deal," he said. "It takes a lot of riding time to get a horse gentle. It can be pretty difficult. People also go for color. That is also a big thing."

Cupp said, through the years, they have had a lot of success at the Hermiston horse sale. This year, the Cupps sold four horses ranging in age from 3 to 11 years old. He said raising and breaking horses is what he does for a living.

"We buy and sell, train rogue horses," he said. "We have a small ranch in Caldwell."

For others, raising and selling horses is a hobby. Lee and Beverly Newell

traveled from Prineville, Oregon, to sell three horses ranging from yearlings to three years old.

Beverly Newell said they have been selling horses at the Hermiston horse sale for five to 10 years, but they have raised horses for longer than that.

"Even though we did other things, we have always had a farm," she said.

Through the years, Beverly Newell said she and her husband have sold dozens of horses to interested buyers ranging from rodeo competitors to those looking for a steady ranch horse. Their horses, however, are bred for the arena.

"Our horses are bred for barrel racing and are arena horses," she said.

At the horse sale on Saturday, Newell said she was just hoping to get the best prices they could for their animals.

"You never know what the market will do when you come to an auction," she said.

Brooke Brumley, Mission, Oregon, said she gets a different perspective at the auction sale. Her job, she said, is to take care of the horses and then ride them in the arena as people buy them for their highest going price.

Brumley said, by keeping the animal calm and demonstrating what it is capable of, she helps boost the bidding so the horse sells for their highest price.

"It's all fun," she said.

BUSINESS BITES

Shearer's Snacks to host military job fair

Shearer's Snacks will host a military job fair from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. the third Friday of each month at the Hermiston facility, 78035 Highway 207. Current and former military members and their family members are invited to attend. For more information about openings or to apply, visit shearers.com.

Business luncheon scheduled

The Hermiston Chamber of Commerce will host a Business to Business Luncheon beginning at 11:45 a.m. Tuesday at the Hermiston Conference Center, 415 S. Highway 395. Chuck Sheketoff, from the Oregon Center for Public Policy, will speak. The cost for the luncheon is \$10 for chamber members and \$13 for non-mem-

bers. For more information or to R.S.V.P., call the chamber, 541-567-6151.

SAGE Center job fair slated

The second annual SAGE Center Agriculture and Energy Job Fair is set for 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 4 at the SAGE Center, 101 Olson Road in Boardman.

The event is open to the public, giving attendees a chance to visit with area food processors, utilities, farms, local government agencies, data centers and educational institutions about careers, education and job-seeking help.

Blue Mountain Community College, Walla Walla Community College, Pery Technical Institute, Oregon State University and Eastern Oregon University are also attending to provide information about educational opportunities.

For more information and a list of or-

ganizations attending, visit the SAGE Center website job fair page at www.visitsage.com or call (541) 481-7243.

HAREC receives \$5,000 grant

Northwest Farm Credit Services has awarded the Oregon State University Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Hermiston a \$5,000 Northwest FCS/CoBank Rural Community Grant Award. The grant will be used for a new building, including three insect-rearing rooms, one tissue culture room, an agronomy laboratory and an equipment room.

"We are so pleased by the support from Farm Credit Services toward our new building at Oregon State University's Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center," HAREC Professor Emeritus and Director Phil Hamm said. "This building will support new facilities that will aid our

faculty and staff to continue to provide new significant research based information to support high value irrigated agriculture in the region. The building will be named after Don Horneck, a well-respected agronomist/soil scientist, colleague and friend who had been a faculty member at HAREC the past 15 years. He died unexpectedly a couple of months ago. Thanks so much for your support."

This year Northwest FCS, with support from CoBank, has awarded 83 rural grants totaling nearly \$150,000. Since 2007, Northwest FCS has presented 353 rural grants totaling more than \$710,750.

Northwest Farm Credit Services is a customer-owned financial cooperative providing financing and related services to farmers, ranchers, agribusinesses, commercial fisherman, timber producers, rural homeowners and crop insurance customers in Montana, Idaho, Oregon, Washington and Alaska.