

# Age-Friendly Status achieved by Kipling area

From the Kipling Klipper, Grasslands News Group

By [Connie Schwalm](#) - December 1, 2022



Efforts recognized. *Left to right:* Randy Dove, President, Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism; Deborah Nordal – Kipling & District Age-Friendly Committee; Colby Sproat, Councillor – Town of Kipling; Susan Hengen – Kipling & District Age-Friendly Committee; James Husband, Reeve – Rural Municipality of Hazelwood; Hon. Everett Hindley, Minister of Seniors, Government of Saskatchewan; Doug Still, Chair Age-Friendly Saskatchewan.

Last week, Kipling and District, Moose Jaw and Regina each received recognition from the Provincial Government as having achieved Age-Friendly Status.

These three communities were also presented with an award from the Government of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism (SSM)

acknowledging their commitment to developing activities and programming that are more inclusive of seniors and benefit all ages.

“I congratulate the recipients of today’s Age-Friendly recognition on their efforts to consider the needs of seniors and older adults, and how their communities can play a role in enhancing their quality of life,” Minister of Seniors Everett Hindley said. “Our government supports the Age-Friendly Communities initiative, which promotes healthy, accessible and inclusive communities, where everyone is valued and supported.”

Linda Anderson (Communications Coordinator – SSM) says that the Age Friendly Community initiative is a “global movement” that has taken root in Saskatchewan.

“As the population around the world ages, the idea of Age Friendly Communities has spread. In Canada, every Provincial Government has committed to supporting this initiative in some way.

“Here in Saskatchewan, there are fifteen communities that are actively involved in becoming Age Friendly. And Kipling and District has now become one of eight communities in this province that have been officially recognized as Age Friendly.”

However, she notes that moving towards Age Friendly Status is a unique kind of investment that takes place at the community level.

“This all begins with people looking at their community through the eyes of an older person, who might see gaps that others miss. Filling those gaps often means making very practical changes that can really make a world of difference to everyone in that community.

“But although there might be various kinds of funding available for specific projects – there really isn’t anyone who is going to offer huge sums of money to a community so that it can become Age-Friendly.

“That means that a community has to be willing to make an investment in itself, and in the people who call that community ‘home’.”

Progress towards recognition as an Age-Friendly Community involves a series of steps that include: establishing an Age-Friendly Committee; securing the support

of municipal government; assessing the community to determine where Age-Friendly initiatives are needed; and developing, publicizing and implementing an action plan.

Susan Hengen (Manager – Kipling Leisure Services) explains that the work done by individuals determined to see Kipling receive this recognition has already borne fruit.

“Age-Friendly communities are about community development by and with older adults, that benefits people of all ages. The Kipling & District Age-Friendly Committee was formed (consisting of: Joanne O’Sullivan (Chairperson), Don Johnson, Deborah Nordal, Laurie Dube and myself) with this as our goal. “Three local governments came together to support this initiative: the Town of Kipling; the Rural Municipality of Hazelwood #94; and the Rural Municipality of Kingsley #124.

“We then developed an Action Plan that identified several ways in which Kipling could become a place where all residents can live safely, enjoy good health and stay involved in their community.

“Several of the priorities we outlined in our Action Plan have already been adopted by the Town of Kipling including: designated parking areas downtown for the Handi-transit bus; development of Kipling’s Downtown Park (in partnership with Kipling Public Library Board); and the inclusion of a ramp in the renovations to be made to the front entrance of the Kipling Arena.”

Deborah Nordal (Kipling & District Age Friendly Committee Member) says that the efforts to make Kipling an Age Friendly Community will benefit residents both in town and in the surrounding area as well.

“I live in a Rural Municipality, not in Kipling itself. But Kipling is ‘our town’ too. For those of us who want to continue to live in this community as we age, development like this is very important.”

Nordal adds that measures which make the community more accessible for seniors also provide others with opportunities for inclusion.

“Anything which improves accessibility for seniors will also benefits others. For example, we have a grandchild with Brittle Bone Disease who may be using a wheelchair at times.

“So, the work that the Town has done to make the sidewalks easier for somebody in a wheelchair to use is something that we appreciate. It’s also something that anyone pushing a stroller will appreciate too.

“These are the kind of practical improvements that a person often doesn’t think about until it’s an issue for them. But by working towards making Kipling an Age-Friendly Community, things are done that make this a better community for everyone!”