

PEOPLE

# City looking for Senior of the Year

By NICHOLAS MERCER

SPECIAL TO THE TELEGRAM

The City of St. John's will announce its first Senior Citizen of the Year award at Kenny's Pond Retirement Residence, Coun. Tom Hann announced Wednesday.

The award, developed by the mayor's advisory committee on seniors, is a part of an initiative by the capital city to embrace its aging population.

"It's time we get started on the road to becoming an age-friendly city," says Hann, who is on the advisory committee.

Two years ago, the committee was inaugurated to advise St. John's on programs and policies affecting seniors.

Frank Lee chairs the group and says it aims to promote and enhance communication between seniors' groups and the city.

"We trust we can positively influence the lives of other seniors in the city," says Lee.

The award is the payoff for those two years of partnership. It is for a senior citizen who gives up his or her time and talent to work on behalf of the city.

"They are doing what they refer to as giving back," says Lee. "Their services deserves some recognition."

While it only goes to one person, the committee hopes the award will highlight the contributions that all senior citizens make to the well-being of the capital city.

Lorraine Best is a volunteer peer advocate on the advisory committee and a senior. She says seniors deserve recognition for their efforts.

"There are so many seniors who give up their time and their energies," says Best.

Mary Davis, community relations manager for Kenny's Pond



Frank Lee, chairman for the mayor's advisory committee on seniors, announces Kenny's Pond Retirement Residence will sponsor the city's new Senior of the Year Award.

— Photo by Karla Kenny/Special to The Telegram

Retirement Residence, says the residence originally approached Hann looking for new programs that would keep residents involved in the community.

"We looked at it as an opportunity to not only get volunteers involved, but to get all of our residents back into the community," says Davis, who adds the award is a great fit for Kenny's Pond Retirement Residence.

Davis said the problem with seniors moving out of their homes and into retirement residences is the feeling of being disconnected from their old life.

"One of the big concerns we always hear is the fear of not being connected and things changing," she said.

Hann says St. John's is ahead of other cities in several areas when it comes to the over-60 population, a population he sees jumping to more

than 40 per cent in the next few years.

"We have to be ready to deal with that changing demographic," says Hann.

"That's why we formed the advisory committee on seniors."

One of the ways the city is improving the lives of seniors is by reducing the property tax for low-income senior citizens.

Lee urges residents of the city to think of people who are contributing to good causes and who make a positive difference in St. John's.

Nominees for the award must be 60 years of age or older, a resident of St. John's, and should have not received payment for their services.

Nominations for the 2011 award must be received no later than Monday, May 2 and the award will be presented Tuesday, May 31.

nmercerc@thetelegram.com

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