



New senior pedestrian safety program kicks off

staff reports

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HENDERSONVILLE — The “Walk Wise, Drive Smart” campaign, which is part of Henderson County’s Livable and Senior Friendly Communities Initiative, will launch its senior pedestrian safety program Saturday. The event, which is 9 to 11 a.m., is open to the public and features three walks from Shelter 2 in Jackson Park.

All walk participants will receive prizes. The walks are of varying lengths and for people of all ages and walking levels. Speakers at the event will discuss how community residents and officials are helping shape plans to create a safer and more inviting walking environment in Hendersonville, not only for senior adults but for all residents.

Next to driving or riding in cars, walking is the most frequent way senior adults get around. For senior adults, to be able to walk safely outside their homes is a major key to keeping them connected to their communities and interests, as well as sustaining their physical and mental health. Improving the pedestrian environment in Hendersonville will benefit not only senior adults but also all residents and visitors.

Compared with younger pedestrians, senior pedestrians have a greater chance of suffering serious or fatal injuries if involved in crashes. More than 31 percent of Hendersonville’s population is 65 or older, making it an ideal model community for the “Walk Wise, Drive Smart” program.

Based on input from various community partner organizations and Hendersonville residents, the yearlong campaign seeks to create at least one safe walking route in 10 Hendersonville neighborhoods.

The campaign will promote four types of activities throughout the coming year:

- Environmental changes, such as improved sidewalk conditions.

- Enforcement support by encouraging the citation of motorists for failure to yield to pedestrians, running stop signs and improper right turns at red lights.
- Education, through safety tips for pedestrians and drivers.
- Encouragement through multiple walking events with giveaways and health information.

Visit www.walk-wise.org for more information about Walk Wise, Drive Smart.