



SCOPE

Skagit County Organized for the Protection of Elders

In October 2009 the National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse awarded Skagit Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault a small grant to establish and maintain a community-based elder abuse prevention network. Skagit County was one of 12 communities approved for the program, out of 70 applicants nationwide.

SCOPE is a collaborative network of public and private sector agencies and interested people focusing on elder abuse detection, intervention and prevention strategies.

Our goal is to increase public awareness of elder abuse and exploitation through community outreach, education and resource development.

SCOPE needs interested community members!
If you would like more information about SCOPE or
are interested in attending an upcoming meeting,
please call:

360.848.5365

Skagit Valley Herald staff

LOCAL

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News Desk: 360-416-2143 / citydesk@skagitpublishing.com

MOUNT VERNON

— Learn about preventing crimes against seniors and watch an award-winning documentary about a senior citizens' chorus Sunday at an event sponsored by a new coalition formed to help seniors.

In honor of Older Americans Month, the group Skagit County Organized for the Protection of Elders and the Mount Vernon Police Department will show "Young@Heart" and offer tips on how to protect seniors from crimes.

The documentary film features the New England senior citizens' chorus, which performs songs by James Brown, the Pointer Sisters, the Bee Gees, Sonic Youth, the Clash, and Bruce Springsteen.

The event will start at 1:30 p.m. Sunday in the Lincoln Theatre, 712 S. First St. Don and The Melodians, an Anacortes-based band, will perform. For information about the movie, contact James B. Dolan at 360-336-2939 or jbdolan@jbdolan.com.

For the hotline for Skagit County Organized for the Protection of Elders, a community-based elder abuse prevention coalition, call 360-848-5365.

competitor was Anacortes High School.
Oak Harbor Mount

Skagit leads nation in fraud complaints

By MARTA MURVOSH
Staff Writer

MOUNT VERNON — Communities in Skagit County lead the nation in fraud and consumer complaints per capita.

People in the Mount Vernon-Anacortes urban area made 685 complaints per 100,000 residents in 2009 to the Federal Trade Commission, according to the FTC's Sentinel Network.

This caused the two communities to be ranked first in a per-capita ranking of 50 communities with consumer fraud complaints to the FTC. Bellingham, the only other Washington city on the list, ranked 33rd.

Elder advocates say many of those complaints to the FTC were likely from senior citizens who may have been victimized.

The new group, Skagit County Organized for the

Elder Abuse

For tips to prevent elder abuse, go to:

- National Center on Elder Abuse www.ncea.aaoa.gov
- American Association of Retired Persons Fraud Fighter: www.aarpfraudfighters.org
- Washington State Aging and Disability Services Administration: www.adasa.dshs.wa.gov
- Attorney General of Washington: www.atg.wa.gov/ProtectingSeniors.aspx

To report abuse or neglect:

- In an emergency, call 911.
- In a nonemergency, call the state's EndHarm hotline, 1-866-363-4276.
- File complaints about a nursing home, boarding home or similar facility with Skagit County Community Action, 360-421-1080 or the state, 1-800-562-6078.
- Attorney General of Washington Consumer Complaint hotline from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday to Friday, 1-800-551-4636 or for the hearing impaired 1-800-833-6384.

Protection of Elders, is p.m. in the Lincoln Theatre working to prevent neglect in Mount Vernon.

and crimes against seniors by educating the elderly and their families, friends and neighbors.

SCOPE includes representatives from Skagit Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services and the Skagit County Community Action Agency.

Today, SCOPE will partner with Mount Vernon police to show the documentary "Young@Heart" at 1:30

p.m. in the Lincoln Theatre working to prevent neglect in Mount Vernon.

At the event, police officers will talk about scams, how they work and what people can do to protect against them.

"Most are someone taking advantage of them for financial gain," wrote crime prevention Sgt. Mike Don in an e-mail Friday.

Common scams include Vernon lawyer who specializes in elder issues, said community artists play on seniors' fears. Some pretend to represent a

government agency and ask a senior for personal financial information.

"They make a lot of this mail look like official government mail and threaten to cut off Social Security payments if it's not filled out," Dolan said.

The high number of complaints per capita in the Anacortes/Mount Vernon area may stem from a high concentration of seniors. In 2008, 15.2 percent of Skagitians were 65 or older, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, compared to 12 percent statewide.

"Over the past 20 years, a lot of people have moved up here to retire," SCOPE co-chairwoman Sandi Everest said. "We have retirees who have money."

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