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News

## Cooling centers set up in Lake County to help senior citizens cope with extreme heat

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With temperatures soaring near 100 degrees last week and the possibility of more sticky days ahead, Lake County agencies have set up cooling centers where senior citizens may seek relief.

“Heat stress is something that kind of creeps up on you, particularly if you’re older” said Lake County Health Commissioner Fred Kellogg. “We think if you need a place, these (cooling centers) are good places to go.”

Joe Tomsick, CEO of the Lake County Council on Aging, noted that senior centers have always been available for senior residents to stay cool in the summer months, but in cases of extreme heat emergencies municipalities may designate them as official cooling centers as well as other facilities like libraries or city halls. Regular operating hours also may be extended.

During daytime hours, senior centers generally are limited to elderly residents. However, other individuals needing relief would be welcomed if the sites are designated as official cooling centers.

Residents in emergency need of transportation may call LakeTran’s Dial-a-Ride service at 440-354-6100 for a ride to their local cooling center.

Another avenue for aid is the Home Energy Assistance Program which is accepting applications for eligible residents to obtain financial assistance up to \$250 for electric bill payments and/or an air conditioner. Criteria for eligibility can be found at [www.lclifeline.org](http://www.lclifeline.org) or by calling 440-350-9160.

Tomsick suggested that residents be aware of advisory warnings initiated by the national weather service which indicate heat emergency situations in local areas.

Information provided by the Council on Aging stated that to reduce the risk of heat-related illnesses individuals should consider limiting indoor physical activity, drink plenty of water, schedule frequent rest breaks and stay in shaded or air conditioned environments. Anyone overcome by heat should be moved to a cool and shaded location.

Tomsick said that it’s strongly recommended that individuals with relatives or neighbors who may be in the position to suffer adverse affects from the heat to check on them twice per day.

The administrator expressed gratitude to the Lake County Commissioners for their help with the cooling centers effort.

In related news, the Geauga County Medical Reserve Corps volunteers, responding to a request of the Ohio Department of Health, contacted more than 200 elderly Geauga residents last week to ensure they knew of the July 7 heat warning and were taking steps to stay cool and hydrated.

The ODH request came late on July 6 when the Weather Service changed the existing heat advisory to a heat warning with the heat/humidity index at 105 degrees or higher for about 80 percent of the state, according to information from the Geauga County General Health District.

"It was a precaution, just to cut down on the number of people who otherwise don't get the word out and reduce the chance of tragedy," said Health Commissioner Robert Weisdack.

Following is a list of designated cooling centers in Lake County (residents must call ahead to confirm times of operation).

The senior centers are: Eastlake, 1580 East 332nd St., 440-975-4268; Fairport, 1380 East St., 440-354-3674; Kirtland, 7900 Chardon Road, 440-256-4711; Madison, 2938 Hubbard Road, 440-428-6664; Mentor, 8484 Munson Road, 440-974-5725; Painesville, 85 N. Park Place, 400-352-8095; Perry, 2800 Perry Park Road, 440-259-3772; Wickliffe, 900 Worden Road; 440-373-5015; Willoughby, 38032 Brown Ave., 440-951-2832; and Willowick, 321 East 314th St., 440-585-5112.

Other site are: Concord Community Center, 7671 Auburn Road 440-639-4650; Grand River City Hall, 205 Singer Ave., 440-357-5222; Painesville Township Hall, 55 Nye Road, 440-352-1443; Manry Park Activities Center, 30100 Arnold Drive, Willowick, 440-516-3011; Willoughby Hills Library and Community Center, 35400 Chardon Road, 440-942-3362; Leroy Community Center, 13028 Leroy Center Road, 440-254-4071; Mentor-on-the-Lake City Hall, 5860 Andrews Road, 440-257-7216.

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