

### **The Need:**

- ◆ Iowa Department on Aging projects the number of Iowans age 65 and older will rise from 450,000 in 2008 to more than 663,000 by 2030
- ◆ Linn County's older adult population is increasing with the last census showing an increase of 15.8% (37,000)
- ◆ Most older adults live in the community, not in nursing homes.
- ◆ Healthy aging has emerged as a major public health issue and nearly three quarters of today's seniors are coping with at least two chronic health conditions.
- ◆ Healthy Aging activities and education extend not just years of life, but quality of life.
- ◆ Older adults want to remain independent in their homes and "age in place." Research has shown that older adults who attend senior centers exhibit healthier behaviors, fewer mental problems, delayed onset of chronic disease and a more positive outlook on life.
- ◆ On average, Medicaid dollars can support nearly 3 older adults in their homes for every person in a nursing home.
- ◆ Keeping seniors engaged and active saves important dollars over the long term.

### **Witwer Senior Center:**

- ◆ Served just under 1800 participants in 2013 and offered 2,790 programs in Health Promotion & Wellness, Life-Long Learning Activities, Leisure & Social Activities, and Nutrition Assessment.
- ◆ Without a dedicated Senior Center, programs are currently dispersed between multiple locations in Linn County with programming occurring regularly at 7 different locations and occasionally at 9 additional locations.
- ◆ Some Linn County residents travel to Johnson County to participate in senior programming because Linn County doesn't have a dedicated center. Current Witwer participants have expressed a desire to participate in more programming but due to the multiple locations and transportation limitations, they must choose between programs. Witwer participants have expressed interest in several new programs that are not currently being offered due to space and time limitations created by staff traveling to multiple locations. Based on this information and the aging population of Iowa and Linn County, we expect that the number of participants engaged in programming will grow significantly when a dedicated Senior Center is formed.

### **Benefits of 1030 5<sup>th</sup> Ave SE Location:**

- ◆ Senior Centers are a focal point for providing resources to older adults & serve the entire community with information on aging, training and education, and developing innovative approaches to aging issues.
- ◆ Co-location with Public Health and in the Medical District further enhances senior's access to resources – including hospitals, doctor's offices and pharmacies. Efforts will be made to identify a local pharmacy to move into the building.
- ◆ Accessibility is extremely important and this location offers ample parking and is located on the bus route.
- ◆ In addition to the array of medical services and providers, this area contains a middle school, a local market – New Bo and arts and cultural attractions. This will be a vibrant area of town where seniors will feel secure and will want to attend.
- ◆ *The variety of opportunities for collaboration between Public Health, the Senior Center, the schools and the arts community could be a model for the nation.*