

## **Dunlap Senior Center marks 50 years with growth, upgrades and renewed energy**

DUNLAP — As the Dunlap Senior Center prepares to celebrate its 50th anniversary later this year, the community staple is experiencing a period of renewed energy, creative growth and significant facility improvements. Plans are underway for a public anniversary celebration later this year, and several major upgrades are expected to be completed ahead of the milestone.

The Dunlap Senior Center continues to operate under a mission adopted years ago: to enhance quality of life by creating opportunities that support wellness, social connections, community engagement and lifelong learning for a diverse and growing older adult population.

In recent years, the Dunlap Senior Center has focused on enhancing the overall experience for older adults through improved food offerings, capital improvement projects and a welcoming atmosphere that emphasizes social connection and community engagement.

“More than one-fourth of Dunlap’s population is age 65 or older,” said Patty Mumm, president of the Dunlap Senior Center Board. “It’s very important that our community continues to offer a place like this.”

Mumm became board president in 2025, stepping into a role deeply rooted in family and community ties. Her late father, Joe Lipichok, was a long-time supporter of the center, and her nephew, Judd Kirk, previously served as its director for many years.

Additionally, Jan Roberts, a longtime Dunlap resident and dedicated community volunteer, stepped into the role of director after retiring as postmaster of the Dunlap Post Office.

The combination of Roberts’ food preparation and Mumm’s leadership has contributed to increased attendance. In partnership with Connections, the area agency on aging, and the Dunlap Dairy Sweet, the center serves warm, home-style lunches five days a week. Meals are available to all ages, with a cost of \$5 for seniors and \$10 for non-seniors. Reservations are required by 9 a.m. the day prior for meal-planning purposes, and anyone interested in attending is encouraged to call the senior center in advance.

Capital improvements have also played a key role in the center’s momentum. In the summer of 2025, donations from Dunlap alumnus Doug Stockstad funded renovations to the center’s restrooms and rear hallway. Both restrooms received new flooring, walls and ceilings, along with improved lighting. One restroom was upgraded with a widened doorway and additional space to improve ADA accessibility.

More recently, the center received a \$62,000 grant from the Dean J. King Foundation to address long-standing facility needs and improve accessibility and safety.

“Greg Brasel repaired the sloping floor, and we’re looking forward to replacing the entire flooring throughout the center to reduce tripping hazards,” Mumm said.

The grant will also fund a new countertop along the length of the serving area, and one of the most anticipated improvements: replacing the front door with a push-button, handicap-accessible entrance.

“We’re planning a big hoopla,” Mumm said about the center’s anniversary. “We’re hoping everything we want done will be completed before the celebration.”

Looking ahead, the center is also pursuing additional grant funding to upgrade its commercial dishwasher and sanitizer system. Plans are also in motion to create a technology and presentation area designed to attract new visitors and expand programming.

“We want to have a large TV and comfortable seating so we can offer monthly presentations and continue drawing more people,” Mumm said.

If fully funded, the project would include a large display television, cushioned seating, and a desktop computer with printer and scanner. The equipment would allow seniors to create and print weekly menus and flyers in-house, a task currently outsourced. The center also hopes to secure funding for one year of paid Wi-Fi service and install surveillance cameras to improve security.

Despite the upgrades, center leaders say their primary focus remains on people.

“We’re excited about all of these improvements, but our biggest goal is growing attendance,” Mumm said. “There’s a stigma about age requirements, but we have good food, good people, and we’re always laughing.”

She added that many residents may not realize the center is open to everyone.

“People of any age are welcome to eat at the senior center,” Mumm said. “The senior discount applies to those 60 and older, but the door is open to all.”

As the Dunlap Senior Center approaches its 50th year, leaders say the combination of creativity, community support and continued investment is helping ensure it remains a vibrant gathering place for decades to come.

Contact Information for the Dunlap Senior Center, (712) 643-2244



An AI-generated image of what the proposed Technology Hub could look like



Patty Mumm, Senior Center Board President and Jan Roberts, Director