

By Mayor Peter Kelly

Halifax Regional Municipality

Hello there; I hope you are enjoying a wonderful summer.

I'd like to take this opportunity to share with you just a few of the age-friendly services which Halifax Regional Municipality offers to its older residents.

□□□□□□



Let's start with gaining access to news-you-can-use.

These days, thanks to technology, there's such an array of information out there that it makes a person's head spin. Well, it needn't be that way.

Go to the main HRM web page (<http://www.halifax.ca>) and type in the word Seniors in the Search window on the left-hand side. You'll find a selection of age-specific information - particularly from our police and fire services – that's both practical and informative.

And there's more. If you go back to the main HRM web page and type in the words Tax Exemptions in the Search window, you'll find some valuable information about residential property tax exemptions of up to \$850, available to all HRM homeowners with a combined household income of \$30,000 or less annually.

If you don't have a computer, simply get in touch with our Call Centre at 490-4000 or 1-800-835-6428 and our staff will be pleased to help you with these or any other topics of

interest. (Incidentally, you'll be relieved to know you'll be speaking to a real-live person, not a machine.)

Whichever way you reach us, by phone or computer, we won't confuse or overpower you, I promise!

□□□□□□□□

Now let's talk about getting around.

Not all of us are as nimble as we used to be; illness or perhaps just the passing of the years takes its toll on our agility. That's why Metro Transit is equipping its fleet with vehicles offering greater passenger access - buses without stairs allowing you to get on and off at sidewalk-level; ones that have special ramps; and ones that actually "kneel."

Our goal is to operate a fleet that's 100% accessible and we're well on our way to achieving it. By August, more than 200 of the system's 309 buses will be equipped.

In addition, four existing bus routes - 52, 58, 62 and 65 - will get accessible low-floor vehicles as will three proposed new services: routes 8, 22 and 57.

Better accessibility will benefit seniors and others as well. Parents with young children in strollers will find life much easier, as will people with bags of shopping.

After all, a transit system only works if people can actually get *on* the buses!

□□□□□□

HRM's library system is another municipal service that is anticipating the special needs of our growing senior population.

For example, we've introduced a series of programs for "Seniors Week" each June. These are offered in various branches and include informational programs on legal issues, film showings, social times and music programs.

Other special features for seniors include home delivery of library materials – to private residences and also nursing homes - and books by mail, where there is no home delivery. Just call your local branch (or HRM's main Call Centre numbers I mentioned earlier) for details.

Well, as you can tell from everything I've shared with you, HRM is committed to helping older residents continue enjoying a meaningful and fulfilling life. I do hope you will take full advantage of the opportunities and services available in our municipality.

If you have a comment or concern, I'd really like to hear from you. You can reach me here at City Hall at kellyp@halifax.ca or by phoning 490-4010. You can also reach me on my personal website www.peterkelly.ca or join me on my Facebook or Twitter pages.