

The Inter-Mountain

Local bank sponsors program for seniors

“There’s no place in life for stealing,” Stanley Gould declared Thursday morning, adding he was pleased to learn that there’s also no place for stealing at the Elkins Rehabilitation & Care Center, where he’s been a resident for the past 12 years.

The ERCC’s zero-tolerance approach to crime is possible through the nationwide crime prevention program, Senior Crimestoppers, which was the topic of a special ceremony and reception that took place at the center. The program has been in effect at the center since 2004, said ERCC administrator Del. Denise Campbell, D-Randolph.

During Thursday’s ceremony, ERCC renewed its commitment to keeping its residents safe when Woodforest National Bank announced that it would step in as the sponsor for Senior Crimestoppers by providing a \$6 million loan to support the program. The bank’s branch manager, Steve Nida, was on hand to present Campbell with a plaque certifying that the ERCC is an official Senior Crimestoppers facility.

Through the program, residents are provided with personal lock boxes and keys – and staff, residents and visitors may take advantage of an around-the-clock anonymous tip line used to gather crime-solving information. Cash rewards of up to \$1,000 are sometimes posted to encourage people to come forward with such case-cracking information.

“It makes me feel better and as if people won’t steal from the residents,”

Gould, an avid West Virginia University sports fan, said. “The administration, they are making sure of that.”

Douglas Breeckner, a field representative with Senior Crimestoppers, said the program has been implemented in 800 facilities throughout 48 states. Likening the program to a “neighborhood watch program for long-term care centers,” Breeckner said there’s been a 93.3 decrease in crime in the centers in which the initiative is in effect.

“We’re really a prevention program,” Breeckner said. “Having Senior Crimestoppers doesn’t mean you have a problem with crime. It means you have zero tolerance program.”

Nida, the branch manager of Woodforest National Bank, said the bank became aware of the program in 2012.

“We thought it was a worthwhile endeavor and something for us to be involved in,” Nida remarked. “It gives your loved ones more confidence and it gives you more confidence.”

Campbell thanked Nida for the bank’s sponsorship.

“This is a great program that will deter anyone from feeling like they can take advantage of anyone here,” Campbell said. “Without the sponsorship from (Woodforest National Bank), we would be trying to do that on our own, and we’re not private investigators.”

To learn more, visit www.seniorcrimestoppers.org.

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