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PRESS RELEASE

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State Highlights the Benefits of Older Workers in observance of *National Employ Older Workers Week*

Observance runs through Sept 24; State initiative engages older workers

SPRINGFIELD – September 19, 2011. Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) is praising having older adults in the workplace and encourages employers to recognize their contributions, in conjunction with *National Employ the Older Worker Week*. Older workers have a wealth of knowledge, can teach skills and mentor newer staff. *National Employ the Older Workers Week* is observed this last full week of September. The annual observance highlights how communities benefit from the contributions of older workers who have remained on the job.

According to statistics by the U.S. Bureau of Labor, more than six million older workers remain in the workforce. And since people are living longer and remaining on the job longer than previous generations, those numbers will likely increase.

“We salute older workers who stay off retirement and continue to play a very important role in the Illinois workforce”, said Michael Gelder, acting director of the Illinois Department on Aging. “*National Employ the Older Workers Week* is a perfect time to recognize their contributions. The week also marks the anniversary of the Older Americans Act, from 1965, which led to more program services to benefit older adults.”

IDoA, through the Area Agencies on Aging, administers the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) to provide on-the-job skills training to individuals age 55 and older who have limited financial resources. SCSEP, federally funded through Title V of the Older Americans Act, also assists low-income seniors who are looking to re-enter the workforce.

In addition to supporting older adults in the workforce, IDoA is also involved in an initiative to engage older adults by increasing their involvement in service, learning and work. A team of dedicated professionals in Illinois has been working to map out the best strategies to engage older adults and tap into their talents to benefit our communities. They will gather Monday, September 26, on the campus of Illinois State University in Normal, for the *Illinois Summit on Aging, Education and Service*. Log on to www.law.siu.edu/GenServeGen.

For more information about program services to assist older adults in Illinois and their caregivers, call the Department on Aging Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966, or for TTY (hearing impaired use only) call 1-888-206-1327.

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