

Seniors: unintrusive technology keeps tabs

From page 1

of Mulberry Gardens. "It's an enhancement. It helps us monitor the residents when our staff is not involved."

The data is collected by a few small devices in each room. Staff members can access the information through a computer

program which organizes the data and allows them to focus on individual rooms.

During a hot summer, keeping track of temperatures becomes especially important.

"As temperatures are in the high 90's, it's crucial to remember that seniors are especially vulnerable

in these extreme temperatures," said Tracy Siegel, a publicist representing GE, who created QuietCare. "They are at an escalated risk for heat stroke, or worse."

If the temperature in any resident's room rises above 90 degrees, a staff member can immediately respond. The same system

helps in the winter months, where staff will respond if temperatures dip below 68 degrees.

The small motion sensors also keep track of when people step into different rooms, so if someone goes into the bathroom but doesn't come out for hours, the staff could respond to help someone

who may have fallen.

On the other hand, if someone is going in and out of the bathroom constantly, it could be a sign of a medical condition that needs treatment.

Philips said that all of this and more is accomplished without the intrusion of microphones or video cameras.

"It's silent to the people here," he said. "Similar to a carbon monoxide or smoke detector, it's a quiet device that is not intrusive. It can even create a sense of security."

Comments? Email rglidden@southingtonobserver.com.

Festival: food main highlight of Italian event

From page 1

"We're hungry," he said. "Tonight I'm here for the food. Even if I get a little wet, it doesn't matter."

Cocchiola recently moved to town and is a member of the Sons of Italy.

More than 20 vendors

featured a variety of Italian and American food, along with novelties and jewelry. A children's carnival also offered various rides.

The vendors, representing many area businesses and civic groups lined Center Street. The vendors were under tents, hoping to keep

their wares dry.

"It's a good time," said Southington Jaycee President Bryan Trudell.

This is the fourth year that the Jaycees were involved with the festival. They were selling fried dough. The Italian American Festival, along with the Apple Harvest

Festival, is how the group raises the money for its various donations to the community.

Sunday, the closing day of the festival, showcased the morning mass, which has drawn as many as 1,000 guests each year.

The mass included a two-block procession and

was led by the Italian Mens Group, festival patrons and the Middletown Italian Marching Band.

The Ladies Rosary Society also sang at the mass.

Officials said the event was successful, even given the rainy and muggy conditions of the weekend.

"It went very well," said Joe LaPorte, an event organizer. "We got hurt on Friday with the intermittent showers, and the heat probably kept a few people away. By and large, though, I think we did fine."

Reporter Rob Glidden contributed to this report.

Ideal: Meridian officials still optimistic over plans

From page 1

lature, but was also lumped into a bill with similar, more expensive, plans going on in Naugatuck and Norwalk. The final bill came with a price tag of over \$20 million, vetoed by Governor Rell because of her unease with the expenditure. The Southington legislators were unable to get another bill through before the end of that legislative session, and came back in 2009 claiming the bill would be their highest priority.

The bill again passed through the legislature, and this time landed on the governor's desk unattached to any other projects and was signed by Rell.

However, Meridian officials have said the worsening economic conditions have made the district somewhat less viable.

Late last year, the Town Council voted unanimously to apply for a newly available grant from the state in an effort to help Meridian

Development partners finance the cleanup of the old Ideal Forging site.

This plan seems to have fallen through with Rell leaving it off of her bonding list.

"They [Meridian] keep trying to find revenue to assist the gap that is associated with the clean up," Perillo said.

Perillo also noted that the housing market is factor in Meridian's plans for the project.

Official Support

Southington's leaders have praised the proposal since its inception. They have recently been doing all they can to move the project along.

Town Manager John Weichsel recently sent a letter to Gov. Rell urging her to put the proposal on the Bonding Commission's agenda.

"The current blighted condition of the property may threaten the progress and transformation Southington's downtown is currently experiencing," he

wrote in a letter dated June 29. "The town has invested over \$1,400,000 in Southington Downtown Renaissance Project with new streetscape and parking improvements, including lamp posts and sidewalk pavers with granite curing. These investments have led to additional privately funded renovations and improvements to the buildings in this area... The fate of the progress achieved in this area is highly dependent upon the success of the Greenway Commons redevelopment project. It is essential to the retention and expansion of business and the employment opportunities they provide moving forward."

Town Council Chairman Ed Pocock III also wrote the state, penning a letter to the Secretary Office of Policy and Management on March 12.

In the letter he said the project would "Breathe life into an area of our town that is currently dead."

Like Weichsel, Pocock

stressed the improved economic and environmental aspects the project could bring.

"I can think of no other

project that will impact the heart of Southington the way the Greenway Commons project will," he wrote.



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