



March 2011 Bait Box
“Understanding Minnesota’s Baby Boomers: A Research Case Study”
Peter Spuit and Lori Laflin

We’re getting older. The first baby boomers turned 65 in 2010. As this decade runs its course, more and more of us will reach that milestone. By 2020, the oldest boomers will be 75, and by 2030 they will be 85. Minnesotans are a hardy bunch, with the second highest life expectancy in the US, topped only by Hawaii. If one goes with the statistics, then Minnesota will have a LOT of boomers to deal with.

Which brings me to a scary topic....boomer driving!!!! Aside from the “older gentleman” who stops his car in the middle of an intersection to check his map, or the “sweet little old lady” who can either see over the top of the steering wheel OR touch the gas/brake pedals, or the octogenarian who wouldn’t have a hearing problem if people just spoke more clearly, we have other things to consider.

- Minnesota will probably have to install much bigger road signs to accommodate the ever-increasing font sizes we’ll need as our eyesight ages.
- How about a senior-only traffic lane, where older boomers can safely hug the side of the lane and go 32 MPH in a 55 MPH zone?
- Emergency vehicles might need much louder sirens as more and more of us start wearing (or see above about not wearing) hearing aids.
- And what about those “spaghetti junction” intersections that can confuse even a mere child of 20 who still has lightning fast reflexes?
- Parallel parking? That will join the dinosaur in extinction. Actually, parallel parking should have been declared a cruel and unusual punishment years ago.

Peter Spuit (Senior Project Consultant with the Minnesota Board on Aging and the Minnesota Department of Human Services), with color-commentary provided by Lori Laflin (coordinator of strategic opinion research for the Minnesota Department of Human Services), will discuss the results of a mail survey conducted among actual, rather than our hypothetical, baby boomers in 2010. They will discuss the results of the survey and the implications of those results for Minnesota in the coming years. For example, how long will boomers work? How many will continue to live in their current locations? How will health issues change? How many will move to Florida or Arizona chasing the sun? And the list goes on.

Please register for this luncheon event on Thursday, April 14 in the Mall of America Boundary Waters Suite, Level 4, East (for the shoppers among you, that’s the Bloomingdale & Sears side of the Mall). Lunch will be provided by CRAVE—it doesn’t get any better than that. Cost is \$40 for MRA members, \$50 for guests, and \$15 for students enrolled in a higher education program and not current employed in a research position.

It’s not too late to let us know you’d like to attend. And, really, why wouldn’t you come? Just send a quick email to mnmra@questarweb.com, then mail a check to Sheena Oswald, Registrar, Questar, 2905 West Service Road, Eagan, MN, 55121