



Falls Prevention Resource Fair Brings Organizations Together to Support Healthy Aging in Wood County

by Hannah Wendels Scott, Health and Well-Being Educator

This summer, the planning of the Falls Prevention Resource Fair has been an exciting project to plan and look forward to! Taking place on October 29 from 2:00 - 4:00 PM at the 2nd Street Community Center in Marshfield, this event is being developed through strong community collaborations. Extension Wood County, the Marshfield Fire Department, Sanford Health Marshfield Clinic, and the Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Central Wisconsin are making this exciting event possible.

Falls remain one of the leading causes of injury and loss of independence among older adults. The goal of this free community event is to connect residents with local resources, screenings, and practical strategies that can help reduce fall risk and support healthy, independent living. By bringing multiple organizations together under one roof, attendees will have access to information and services that can make a meaningful difference in their health and well-being.

The Resource Fair will feature a variety of community organizations and healthcare professionals offering educational opportunities, demonstrations, and screenings.

Planned activities include:

- **Balance testing, assistive devices assessments, and fall recovery demonstrations** from Marshfield Clinic Physical Therapy
- **Medication and fall risk education** provided by Marshfield Clinic Pharmacy Residents
- **Vision and falls information** from the Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- **Hearing screenings** through All Ears Hearing Care
- **Blood pressure checks** provided by the Marshfield Fire Department
- **Community resources and aging services information** from the ADRC of Central Wisconsin
- **Exercise demonstrations** from the 2nd Street Community Center
- **StrongBodies demonstrations and fall prevention education** from Extension Wood County

This event highlights the tremendous value of community collaboration. Each organization brings unique experiences and expertise, allowing residents to learn about the many factors that contribute to fall risk, including balance, strength, vision, hearing, medications, and overall health. Together, these organizations are working toward a shared goal of helping older adults remain safe, active, and independent.



Hannah Wendels Scott leading exercises in a StrongBodies class.

Falls Prevention Resources Fair *continued*

Momentum is also building for the upcoming StrongBodies strength training program, which will begin on November 16 at the 2nd Street Community Center. StrongBodies is an evidence-based program designed to improve strength, balance, and overall physical function for adults and older adults. The Falls Prevention Resource Fair provides an excellent opportunity to introduce residents to the program, demonstrate exercises, and generate excitement for participation before class kicks off.

All County Board members are encouraged to stop by the Falls Prevention Resource Fair on October 29 from 2:00 - 4:00 PM at the 2nd Street Community Center to see firsthand the collaborative efforts being made to promote healthy aging in Wood County. This event will showcase how local partnerships can come together to address community needs, connect residents with valuable resources, and support a healthier future for all.



Wading Into Science by the River

Annual event promotes the value of cross-sector collaboration in supporting youth engagement, lifelong learning, and environmental stewardship.

by Kayla Rombalski, Community Development Educator

Science By The River continues to serve as a valuable community engagement initiative that connects residents with science, natural resources, technology, and local organizations through hands-on learning experiences. Facilitated by UW-Madison Division of Extension Wood County and in coordination with the statewide Wisconsin Science Festival, Science By The River will take place on Saturday, October 17, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in Wisconsin Rapids.



Attendees listen to a presenter at one of the Science by the River Discovery Stations.

Now in its sixth year, Science By The River was created to expand access to informal science education while showcasing the organizations and professionals whose work contributes to the quality of life, recreation, and environmental health of Wisconsin Rapids, Wood County, and communities along the Wisconsin River. Through interactive Discovery Stations, participants of all ages are encouraged to explore, ask questions, and engage directly with local organizations and volunteers. These experiences help build awareness of topics ranging from natural resource management and wildlife conservation to technology and communications systems



Attendees participate in a hands-on activity at one of the Science by the River Discovery Stations.

The 2026 event will feature a diverse collection of Discovery Stations designed to make science accessible and relevant to everyday life. Through interactive, hands-on experiences, participants will explore topics related to natural resources, environmental stewardship, technology, engineering, wildlife, and water systems. The event encourages residents of all ages to engage with local experts and discover how science influences their communities and daily lives.

Science by the River *continued*

Discovery Stations provide opportunities for participants to investigate real-world challenges, develop problem-solving skills, and gain a deeper understanding of the natural and technological systems that shape central Wisconsin. Activities will include demonstrations, experiments, design challenges, and experiential learning opportunities that promote curiosity, critical thinking, and lifelong learning. Collectively, these experiences showcase the breadth of educational, environmental, and community resources available throughout the region while illustrating the value of collaborative partnerships in advancing community engagement and environmental literacy.

"What we enjoyed most about the event was the wide variety of people and families that engaged who were mostly unfamiliar with the topics of our station."

- Discovery Station Host

"Science by the River was amazing! It expanded from last year and had some very cool hands-on booths for kids. Looking forward to next year already!"

- Science by the River Participant



A Discovery Station host interacts with a young person at Science by the River.

The continued growth of Science By The River demonstrates the value of community-based educational programming and the strong commitment of participating organizations to public engagement. Extension staff are currently recruiting additional Discovery Station Hosts, creating opportunities for new community partners to share their expertise and connect with local families. A new inclement-weather location has also been secured to help ensure the event can proceed regardless of weather conditions.

By fostering curiosity, supporting lifelong learning, and building connections among residents and community organizations, Science By The River contributes to a stronger, more informed, and more engaged Wood County community. The event serves as an example of how collaborative partnerships can create meaningful educational opportunities while increasing awareness of the natural resources, organizations, and volunteer efforts that enhance quality of life throughout the county. For additional information, visit www.facebook.com/ScienceByTheRiver.