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## **NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Falls Prevention Awareness Day: September 22, 2013 Eastern Idaho Public Health District Will Join Observance**

(Idaho Falls, ID) — Idaho is one of 47 states along with the national Falls Free<sup>®</sup> Initiative that are declaring a statewide Falls Prevention Awareness Day on the first day of fall, September 22, 2013. The Falls Free<sup>®</sup> Initiative is also petitioning Congress to proclaim September 22 as the 6<sup>th</sup> annual National Falls Prevention Awareness Day.

This year's theme, *Preventing Falls—One Step at a Time*, seeks to unite professionals, older adults, caregivers, and family members to play a part in raising awareness and preventing falls in the older adult population.

"Falls are the leading cause of nonfatal injury and injury death in those individuals 65 and older. In 2010, 127 Idahoans aged 65 and older died from a fall," said Timalee Geisler, Senior Health Education Specialist at Eastern Idaho Public Health District. "We need to raise awareness of the many preventive measures that can be taken to keep our seniors safe."

Every 15 seconds, an older adult is seen in an emergency department for a fall-related injury. Falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries for those aged 65 and over. The chances of falling and of being seriously injured in a fall increase with age.

"Falls are not a normal part of aging, and this day of awareness provides an opportunity to educate older adults and the community at large about how to reduce the risks associated with falling," said (Bonita) Lynn Beattie, vice president of Injury Prevention with the National Council on Aging (NCOA), leader of the Falls Free<sup>®</sup> Initiative. "We encourage seniors and their families to take proactive steps to prevent falls and stay independent for as long as possible."

Studies show that a combination of interventions can significantly reduce falls among older adults. Experts recommend:

- A physical activity regimen with balance, strength training, and flexibility components.
- Consulting with a health professional about getting a fall risk assessment.
- Having medications reviewed periodically.
- Getting eyes checked annually.
- Making sure the home environment is safe and supportive.
- New research also suggests hearing loss should be routinely assessed.

At senior centers and other community-based organizations across the United States, programs like A Matter of Balance, Tai Chi, and Stepping On help older adults gain the strength, improved balance, and confidence to help them live healthier lives and preserve their independence.

In eastern Idaho, seniors are invited to join Fit and Fall Proof™ classes beginning the week of September 23. These exercise classes are free to the public.

**About the Falls Free® Initiative**

Led by the National Council on Aging, the Falls Free® Initiative includes more than 40 states and 70 national organizations, professional associations, and federal agencies working collaboratively to bring education, awareness, and evidence-based solutions to local communities. Falls Free® seeks to provide hundreds of thousands of older Americans with the resources and education needed to reduce their risk of injury. For more information, please visit: [www.ncoa.org/FallsFreeInitiative](http://www.ncoa.org/FallsFreeInitiative).

**Current Fit and Fall Proof™ class dates, times, and locations**

<p><b>Bonneville County:</b> Idaho Falls Senior Center 535 West 21st Street 9:30 – 10:15 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday</p>	<p><b>Bonneville County:</b> Bonaventure of Idaho Falls 4000 South 25<sup>th</sup> East 9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday</p>	<p><b>Bonneville County:</b> Liberty Square Sr. Apartments 2475 South Ammon Road 10:45 – 11:30 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday</p>
<p><b>Bonneville County:</b> Ammon LDS North Stake Bldg. (near 17th Street &amp; 45th East) 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday</p>	<p><b>Bonneville County:</b> Milo LDS Church Building 75<sup>th</sup> East Milo Road 11:30 – 12:00 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday</p>	<p><b>Custer County:</b> Mackay Senior Center 301 Cedar 10:45 – 11:30 a.m. Monday and Friday</p>
<p><b>Jefferson County:</b> Rigby LDS Stake Center 258 West 1<sup>st</sup> North 1:00 – 1:45 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday</p>	<p><b>Jefferson County:</b> Rigby Senior Center 391 Community Lane 1:00 – 1:45 p.m. Monday and Wednesday</p>	<p><b>Jefferson County:</b> Teton View Apartments 490 Annis Highway, Rigby 2:15 – 3:00 p.m. Monday and Wednesday</p>
<p><b>Jefferson County:</b> Ririe Senior Center 395 Main Street 1:15 – 2:00 p.m. Tuesday and Friday</p>	<p><b>Madison County:</b> Madison County Senior Center 36 South 2<sup>nd</sup> West, Rexburg 11:00 – 11:45 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday</p>	<p><b>Madison County:</b> Village Community Gardens 121 N. Center Street, Rexburg 11:00 – 11:45 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday</p>
<p><b>Teton County:</b> Teton County Senior Center 60 South Main, Driggs 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. Monday and Wednesday</p>		