

Seniors? cybersecurity seminar coming up

By Mike Riley

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Carlow Mayo Public Library and the Carlow Recreation Committee will be holding a cybersecurity seminar for seniors and others who feel unsure online on Nov. 16, according to a media release sent out by CMPL CEO and head librarian Carrie McKenzie on Oct. 24. It will take place at the Carlow Community Centre at 1702 Fort Stewart Road in Fort Stewart at 6:30 p.m. and will be taught by Cara Hicks. McKenzie and Hicks comment to Bancroft This Week on this informative upcoming event. McKenzie says that this cybersecurity seminar will be for seniors and others who feel unsure online. She says it was the CMPL library board chair, Marian Peirce, who had the contact information for Hicks. [Peirce] heard that Ms. Hicks runs these seminars and we all agreed that with the number of scams happening now, we need to help better inform our community on safe online practices. Due to the small footprint of the library, we reached out to the Carlow Recreation Committee for their community centre so that we can have more room for attendance, she says. McKenzie says that Hicks has a background in IT and cyber security and has a real passion for keeping seniors safe online and that they're excited to see her strategies so that they can offer help at the library as well. Hicks says she spent 15 years working in IT for an Ottawa association delivering cybersecurity training to staff in the last four years and that she worked with a colleague to develop a cybersecurity for seniors presentation. I delivered it to the Shamrock Club in the spring and someone there heard about it and asked if I could speak in Carlow Mayo. My aim is to protect people. Seniors in particular have worked hard to have a comfortable retirement. Bad actors want a piece of it. I want to give them tools to help them spot the danger zones. Cyber crimes are dreadfully underreported. It is so important for people to speak up and share their knowledge with each other. If you are caught, I say shout from the tallest roof to say look at what that criminal did or tried to do. Don't be ashamed to be caught. The more vocal you are, the better all of them will be protected, she says. McKenzie says that the seminar on Nov. 16 will cover the do's and don'ts of using the Internet and that Hicks is open to answering any questions about phone scams as well. She will be able to give our seniors and those who are nervous online tips and tricks to finding out the difference between safe Internet use and scams, she says. Attendees do not need to bring anything to the seminar on Nov. 16, as they'll have scrap paper and pencils for note taking and light refreshments will be served. McKenzie estimates the seminar will take 45 minutes to an hour, but that Hicks is willing to go longer if there are any questions or concerns from community members. McKenzie told Bancroft This Week that there has been great positive feedback about the seminar from the community and people are marking it in their calendars. I would like to add that this seminar is not just for seniors. It is for anyone who feels unsure about the cyber world, she says. I know I am going to be there taking notes.