

Kennedy initiated recognition of seniors in U.S.

A meeting with the National Council of Senior Citizens resulted in President John F. Kennedy designating May 1963 as Senior Citizens Month, encouraging the nation to pay tribute in some way to older people across the country.

In 1980, President Jimmy Carter's proclamation changed the name to Older Americans Month, a time to celebrate those 65 and older through ceremonies, events and public recognition.

As of July 1, 2009, there were 39.6 million people 65 and older in the United States.

This age group accounted for 13 percent of the total population. Between 2008 and 2009, this age group increased by 770,699 people, according to the U.S. Census.

Projections are for the population of people 65 and older in 2050 to be at 88.5 million. . People in this age group would comprise 20 percent of the total population at that time.

In 2009, 6.5 million people 65 and older who were in the labor force. Projections indicate that by 2018, the number will reach 11.1 million.