In our June 6 newspaper, we carried an article about the Iron River Senior Center facing nutrition program cuts.

The article noted that, like much of the U.P., the nutrition programs in both Iron and Dickinson counties are on the decline. The decline has put the local senior center at risk of losing its entire program.

Participation just isn't there, and that means a serious look needs to be taken at whether it is economically feasible to continue the funding for such programs.

And if the nutrition programs at the Iron River center are at risk, you can be sure other centers are, or will soon be, at risk as well.

According to the article, the cost of preparing a nutritious meal is about $8.39 per meal. The center asks those who show up to eat to pay $4 for the $8.39 meal.

Obviously, not enough people are showing up for a meal, and sometimes some either can't or won't pay that $4 fee.

This past week, seniors received a survey in the mail from the Iron River Senior Center Site Council and from Jeff Heino, executive director of DICSA (Dickinson Iron Community Services Agency).

The survey is asking seniors to respond to about nine questions regarding meal service at the center… Do you go there for meals? If not, why not?

There are also questions about adding a salad bar or changing the meal time to noon.

Basically, the survey wants to know whether you, as a senior citizen, enjoy the opportunity of having a meal at the center or not.

So, if you received your survey, please take some time and respond by June 29.

A lack of response would definitely signal that you're just not interested, and that will indicate that the funds now going to the Iron River Senior Center will be allocated to some other area of the state where seniors are interested.

What the survey says will determine the future not only at the Iron River center, but will definitely have a ripple effect on other centers as well.

In the meantime, stop by the center to see exactly what it has to offer seniors.

There's more on the plate at our local senior centers than meat and potatoes. Our senior centers provide a great place to meet, to play cards, to socialize, to dance as well as a place to enjoy a great meal at bargain rates.

--Allyce Westphal