Library teaches seniors, workers keys to financial security

ERIC CZARNIK C & G Staff Writer

WEST BLOOMFIELD - Seniors and job hunters who are seeking financial security may check into workshops available this month at the West Bloomfield Township Library.

The library will host a Sept. 24 workshop that will show seniors how to research potential investments and avoid scams.

The lecture will be taught by Rick Bloom, who is the president of Bloom Asset Management as well as a financial radio show host and newspaper columnist.

Bloom said part of his speech will explore common fraudulent schemes in areas such as long-term health care and annuities. One telltale sign of a scam is an offer that promises unrealistic returns, like doubling money in six months, he said.

According to Bloom, spreading the word is necessary because seniors tend to be more susceptible to scams, especially in an Internet age.

"We live in a world that is ever-changing," he said. "Seniors do want to trust people, and unfortunately, too many of them trust the wrong people." For working people who are not retired, the library will have a Sept. 30 beginner's workshop on using the LinkedIn Web site as a way to network and find jobs.

According to Mary Killian, the library's adult services coordinator, LinkedIn accepts user information and searches its database to connect a user to other career professionals who might have shared interests or goals.

Killian predicted that the main target demographic of the LinkedIn lecture will likely be workers ages 30-50, and some of them will be looking for career transitions.

"LinkedIn really appeals to people who are already working who may not be on Facebook or MySpace," she said. "You build this web of people who can speak for your quality." During the event, Walsh College Marketing Manager Brenda Meller will teach people how to set up profile pages.

Meller said she got involved with LinkedIn three or four years ago through a colleague's recommendation, and she used it while she was looking for a job last year.

"The traditional routes, the Monsters and Hotjobs, were really not the way for me to go personally," she said. "I knew that LinkedIn would provide me a more targeted way to look for positions." In the end, the site was instrumental in helping her snag her current position at Walsh last fall. "It was definitely a success story for me," she said.

Bloom's lecture on avoiding senior scams will be held at the West Bloomfield Township Public Library, 4600 Walnut Lake Road, at 11 a.m. Sept. 24; no registration is necessary.

The LinkedIn job networking workshop will last from 1-3 p.m. Sept. 30 at the library. Registration is required. For more information, visit www.wblib.org or call (248) 232-2290.

You can reach Staff Writer Eric Czarnik at eczarnik@candgnews.com or at (586) 498-1058.