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TRUST FUND GRANTS \$81,500 TO REMOVE BLIGHTED HOUSES

(Atlantic, Iowa November 5, 2020) The Southwest Iowa Housing Trust Fund has awarded \$81,500 to demolish 6 dilapidated houses in Southwest Iowa communities. The grants include one property in Griswold, two in Red Oak, and three in Villisca. The awards will pay for up to 50% of the actual cost of asbestos testing and removal and demolition, up to a maximum grant of \$15,000 per property. In order to qualify City's had to take ownership of the property and demonstrate that removal of the property is the best option for the improvement of the neighborhood. The application process is highly competitive as there is a large need throughout the region to remove houses that are beyond repair.

Southwest Iowa Planning Council (SWIPCO) administers the housing trust fund. SWIPCO Executive Director, John McCurdy, said "There is a huge unmet need in our region for new and rehabilitated housing, but on the flip side there are many situations where the best thing for a neighborhood is to demolish a dangerous eyesore and move on to better things. We're proud to have one of the few programs in the state that sets aside funds to do this unglamorous but needed work."

The Southwest Iowa Housing Trust Fund serves the counties of Harrison, Shelby, Cass, Montgomery, Page, and Fremont. It is supported by membership dues paid by the participating counties, by grant funds including from the Iowa Finance Authority, and by revenue generated from loans made to first time homebuyers. The main programs the trust fund carries out include new homeownership grants and loans, housing rehabilitation, and dilapidated property removal. Information about trust fund is available at www.swipco.org under the "Housing" tab.

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