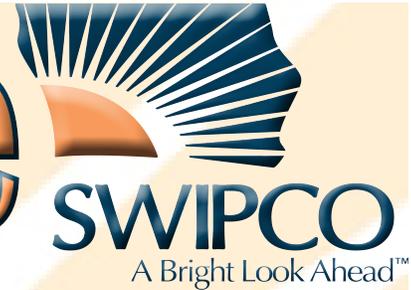


The Update



February 2022

Serving the Counties of Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Montgomery, Mills, Page, Pottawattamie, and Shelby

Let's Communicate

We Iowans are a quiet people, content to do good work without talking much about it. But when it comes to rural economic development, that's exactly the wrong approach—if we're going to make a difference in the time we've got here, people need to know what's going on!

For our part, we've taken the first step toward better communication by bringing on a new staff member, Communications Coordinator C.J. Petersen. He's tasked with a number of things, including producing the newsletter you're reading right now, that will tell the story of our work.

It is my sincere hope that *The Update* becomes your resource for staying in the know about SWIPCO & SWITA projects and activ-



SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy initiatives, but we'll need your help to keep this newsletter timely and current.

Got a community project coming up? Let us know about it. Grant money to distribute? We've got you. Community betterment to highlight? You know what to do. Communication is key to the future growth of southwest Iowa.

I hope you'll be part of it!

Please feel free to send story ideas to cj.petersen@swipco.org.

Save the Date

February 14-18 - SWIPCO Lead Hazard Reduction Contractors' training in Des Moines

February 15 - SWIHTF Meeting 10 a.m. via zoom

February 16, 17 - IEDA Main Street Iowa Application Workshops 10:30 a.m.

February 22 - IEDA Main Street Iowa Application Workshop 10:30 a.m.

February 24 - SWIPCO Board Meeting 1:30 p.m. at Atlantic Golf and Country Club

Recent Grant Awards

Randolph - The city received a \$168,000 CDBG award to assist in upgrades to outdated sewer and waste treatment.

Mondamin - The city received a \$300,000 CDBG award to assist in repairing and upgrading its water treatment and distribution systems.

Clarinda - The city received a \$600,000 CDBG award to assist Southwest Iowa Families, Inc., to expand its current facilities and meet mental health treatment demand for southwest Iowa.

Harlan - The city received a \$249,000 CDBG award to complete housing demo and rehab.

Villisca -The city received a \$249,000 CDBG award to assist in housing demo and rehab.

Walnut - The city received a \$249,000 CDBG award toward housing demo and rehab.

Stanton - The city received a \$254,000 CDBG award to assist with housing demo and rehab.

Visit www.swipco.org/planning to view available funding opportunities!

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SWIHTF Seeks Applications

The Southwest Iowa Housing Trust Fund, administered by SWIPCO is seeking applicants for its Homeownership Assistance Program.

The program is made possible by a \$100,000 grant from the Iowa Finance Authority.

Grants provide \$4,000 at closing in the form of a five-year, fully forgivable loan provided the homeowner stays in the home for at least five years. The loan is forgiven in 20% increments each year.

Additionally, homebuyers may qualify to borrow up to \$3,000 more at a favorable 1% interest rate to be paid back over a maximum of five years.

SWIPCO Grants Specialist Ann Anstey said the Homeownership Assistance Program is a little-known but valuable option for homebuyers. "This is a great program for folks who want to own a home of their own," said Anstey. "A lot of times, people qualify but don't even know the program's there for them to use, and we want to change that."

Anstey said the program is available to individuals and families



Ann Anstey
Grants Specialist II

who earn up to 80% of the area median income where they live, and she can help people determine whether they qualify.

Approximately 25 homeownership grants will be approved in the fiscal year and are approved on a first-come, first-served basis.

To apply, homebuyers must have a signed purchase agreement in effect and have a mortgage application in process with a lender.

Applicants can request an application from ann.anstey@swipco.org or call SWIPCO at 712-243-4196.



TRANSIT TALK

Remembering a mentor...



Kristen Templeton
Transit Coordinator

our transit office.

One thing was for certain: whenever you needed a pick-me-up (literally or figuratively), it was natural to think of this kind-hearted man.

To know Kelly Davis was to feel like you'd known him for years.

SWITA is better for his service.

For more than 28 years, Kelly was the eyes, ears, and logistical mastermind of SWITA. He knew where each vehicle was at all times, and where the next one would need to be and on time.

While Kelly's retirement certainly left a void in the office, his passing leaves a void in our hearts.

SWIPCO employees took up a collection of memorial funds and will honor Kelly at his funeral, to be held at a later date.

Our deepest condolences go out to Kelly's family, friends, and co-workers who will miss him dearly.

That attention to detail earned him a reputation, whether he was serving as a sports official or working the phones

Our deepest condolences go out to Kelly's family, friends, and co-workers who will miss him dearly.

In Memory



Kelly Lee Davis
1954-2022

CODE CONUNDRUMS

by Dani Briggs
Planning Technician II

Zoning ordinances allow cities to implement land use regulations to ensure desired development patterns and maintain health and safety standards for residents.

Zoning decisions are overseen by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

The Planning and Zoning Commission make recommendations to City Council, who ultimately have the final say. Since these two groups play different roles in the process, it is important to note that they cannot be the same group of individuals.

It can be difficult for cities to fill the positions of city council sometimes, let alone another commission.

Can smaller cities do anything to regulate zoning?

Yes! Some smaller cities may opt to have a restricted residence ordinance instead of traditional zoning. With a restricted residence ordinance, a city would establish the “residential” area which then has regulations such as what types of buildings can be constructed and setbacks.

Since restricted residence ordinances have less regulations than a zoning ordinance, cities often pair them with additional ordinances such as an accessory use ordinance. SWIPCO can assist with writing and adopting any ordinance that may suit your city’s needs!



STAFF MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS

Nicole Rhodes has worked with SWIPCO for more than a year, first in the SWITA Transit Team as Outreach Coordinator. Last fall, an opportunity opened up that fit Nicole’s skillset very well.

Since November, Nicole has had the title of Grants Specialist II/Lead Hazard Reduction Program Coordinator. In this role, she manages applications for the HUD Lead Hazard Reduction grant funds through the process from start to finish.

Due to a lack of lead-certified contractors in the area, Nicole’s program also oversees contractor certification courses. The HUD grant pays a per diem to cover lost wages, hotel, and meals for contractors who wish to participate in the lead hazard reduction training and are willing to submit bids on the projects.

Nicole lives in Atlantic with her significant other and son, who plays varsity basketball. Her favorite part about coming to work at SWIPCO is being able to help people.

If you are a contractor interested in doing the lead work for SWIPCO, or are concerned about lead in your residence, contact nicole.rhodes@swipco.org with questions about the program!



Nicole Rhodes

Barb Smithson has been a driver with SWITA for over 13 years, where she has earned a reputation for integrity and spirit of service.

Barb operates the Missouri Valley SWITA taxi service, which provides on-demand transportation. The taxi operates Monday through Friday between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Residents can request rides within Missouri Valley city limits for \$2.50 each way, or \$2.00 for elderly riders. Several transit participants catch a ride with Barb on a weekly, standing-appointment basis, taking trips to the grocery store and doctor appointments.

SWITA also operates taxi services in Atlantic, Glenwood,

Harlan, Red Oak, and Shenandoah.

Barb is known for her kindness, learning the names of her passengers and getting to know them individually.

Barb has two beautiful dogs and lives in Missouri Valley with her husband, Gary, who is SWITA’s longest-tenured transit driver.

Thank you, Barb!



Barb Smithson helps a transit rider disembark her SWITA bus.

SWIPCO Welcomes New Communications Coordinator



C.J. Petersen
Communications Coordinator

SWIPCO is happy to welcome C.J. Petersen to our staff in the newly created role of Communications Coordinator.

C.J. will oversee community outreach, public engagement, media communications, and educational programming for SWIPCO and SWITA in order to promote collaborative development efforts. He will also work to increase awareness and use of public transit services.

“Southwest Iowa is the best place I’ve called home, and I truly appreciate the opportunity to come back,” said C.J., who is 31 years old. “SWIPCO and SWITA are vital instruments for im-

proving our rural way of life, and I’m excited to help tell that story.”

A 2008 graduate of Atlantic High School, C.J. was most recently employed as a human resources coordinator, brings several years of communications and community organizing experience to his new role. C.J. joined the SWIPCO/SWITA team January 3, 2022, working in the Atlantic office.

“SWIPCO and SWITA contribute a huge amount to our region, but because we do everything from getting kids to school to making small business loans, it can be hard to focus on communicating about that work, which is what having C.J. onboard will allow us to do,” said John McCurdy, Executive Director of SWIPCO. “We support local people with local services, and I can’t think of a better way to live our values than by bringing someone like C.J. home to do the work he loves.”

C.J. and his husband, Luke, plan to relocate from their home in Templeton in the spring.

To contact C.J., email him at cj.petersen@swipco.org.

Birthdays & Anniversaries



Phil Richter
Building Inspector I
2 Years of Service on Feb. 7



Daurine Petersen
Human Resources Coordinator
11 Years of Service on Feb. 22



Thank you to both Phil and Daurine for your service to SWIPCO!

SWIPCO STAFF ROSTER

John McCurdy, AICP
Executive Director

Rhonda Oliphant
Finance Manager

Michael Ballinger
Maintenance Assistant

Mark Hansen
Fleet Maintenance Specialist

Christy Pederson
Transit Assistant

Phil Richter
Building Inspector I

Mark Lander
Transit Director

Kersten Abild
Transit Dispatcher

Dani Briggs
Planning Technician II

Sandy Hansen
Grants Specialist III

C.J. Petersen
Communications Coordinator

Kristen Templeton
Transit Coordinator

Alexsis Fleener, AICP
Community Development Director

Ann Anstey
Grants Specialist II

Tracy Clark
Transit Assistant - Operations

Dee Holtz
Administrative Assistant

Daurine Petersen
Human Resources Coordinator

Kristine Stokes, AICP
Community Development Specialist

Karen Mauer
Administrative Services Director

Mackenzie Bandow
Community Development Specialist

Tammy DeBord
Grants Specialist II

Matthew Lee
Building Inspector II

Nicole Rhodes
Grants Specialist II

Leslie Wright
Community Development Specialist

Teresa Wright
Finance Specialist