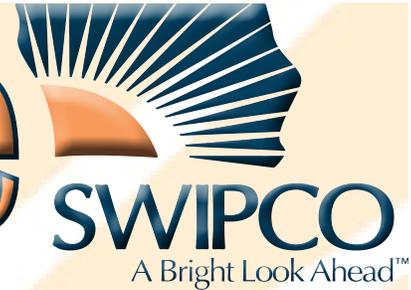


The Update



May 2022

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

All Together Again

Rich Stehly is the kind of guy who's always in the right place at the right time. But even for Rich, being named SWITA Driver of the Year is not something that happens every day.

On April 30, the SWITA team consisting of administrators, staff, and drivers came together on a blustery Saturday morning for a day of professional development, training, and recognition. The semiannual Drivers' Meeting, held in the spring and fall, was held at Atlantic Golf and Country Club. Driver of the year is an award that recognizes outstanding service among a group of exceptional public servants.

This year, Rich Stehly received the award in recognition of his commitment to service to SWITA as a dedicated team player. Rich always lends a hand when needed, often picking up extra shifts to cover when the need arises. Rich is a mentor to his fellow drivers, often taking up the role of problem-solver whenever necessary.

Also presented were Star Awards for Outstanding Driver to JB Butler, Darrell Newman, Mike Clark, Dean Driskell, and James Watson. Outstanding Rookie Drivers were Bob Carey and Joe McCarthy.



Pictured, left to right: SWITA Transit Coordinator Kristen Templeton; 2022 Driver of the Year Richard Stehly; and SWITA Transit Director Mark Lander.



SWITA Drivers and Staff pose for a group photo at the Spring 2022 Drivers' Meeting held April 30, 2022.

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Little Trojans Wrestling Donation



Pictured, left to right: SWIPCO Transit Coordinator Kristen Templeton; Kristi Arnold and Vicki Levy, sisters of Kelly Davis; Quinton Steffens, Coach Killion, and Zayda Killion of Little Trojans Wrestling; and SWIPCO Transit Director Mark Lander.

On April 30th, SWIPCO's transit leaders presented an award to Little Trojans Wrestling in the amount of \$400 for equipment.

The award was made from funds raised by SWIPCO employees and drivers to honor the memory of former SWIPCO Transit Coordinator Kelly Davis, who passed away earlier this year and was a strong supporter of local athletics, especially wrestling.

SWIPCO Brings Downtown Housing Grant Awards to Southwest Iowa

The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) recently announced that five SWIPCO communities have been awarded Downtown Housing Grants through funds available from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

The grants are meant to help enhance housing opportunities for upper-story living in communities with fewer than 30,000 residents. With limited housing options available in many rural communities, these grants will allow for rehabilitation and repurposing of existing downtown buildings that would otherwise go unoccupied.

“This is a great economic development tool for our towns as we seek to leverage creative growth opportunities,” said SWIPCO Community Development Director Alexis Fleener. “We’re thrilled that SWIPCO is able to be a part of making southwest Iowa an even better place to live, work and raise a family.

The five community recipients of the grants are Atlantic (\$300,000), Clarinda (\$200,000), Glenwood (\$200,000), Logan (\$178,000), and Stanton (\$100,000).



Kristen Templeton
Transit Coordinator

TRANSIT TALK Honoring Kelly Davis

At SWITA’s semiannual transit drivers’ meeting, we had an opportunity to reflect on the changes that have come our way over the last several years. Notably, the COVID-19 pandemic meant that we couldn’t gather in person for a couple years.

For many of us who work in transit, the day was memorable for another reason: four SWITA drivers received the Kelly Davis Servant Leadership Award, recognizing the commitment they share to serve their teams with distinction.

The award will be presented each year to a driver who demonstrates a desire to serve their community and team in the way Kelly did: with a sense of purpose and selflessness.

The 2022 Kelly Davis Servant Leadership Award was presented to Max Smelser, Larry Anderson, Barbara Smithson, and Dwayne Hemminger. Fittingly, each of the drivers honored was hired by Kelly Davis during his time as SWITA Transit Coordinator.

On hand to celebrate the ceremony and greet the honorees were Kelly’s sisters, Kristi Arnold and Vicki Levy, who traveled from Kansas City and Des Moines to participate in the day’s activities. Transit Director Mark Lander delivered a speech honoring Mr. Davis prior to the presentation of the awards.



Pictured, left to right: Kristi Arnold and Vicki Levy, sisters of Kelly Davis; SWITA Transit Director Mark Lander; SWITA Transit Coordinator Kristen Templeton; and SWITA Drivers Larry Anderson, Dwayne Hemminger, and Max Smelser.

STAFF MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Dan Weber is a driver who currently serves SWITA on our Oakland Foods Work Route. He has worked for SWITA since last fall, having previously worked in the trucking industry.

His shift requires him to work overnight, and sometimes that means meeting some interesting characters! Dan loves being able to get people to and from work safely while making sure they have a good experience along the way. Excellent customer service and attention to detail is something Dan takes great pride in.

Dan’s attentiveness to detail may have saved a life recently. A passenger was experiencing a medical episode. Dan’s quick thinking allowed him to call 911 and get his passenger to a safe meeting place so that emergency personnel could take it from there. We are glad to have a caring individual like Dan on the SWITA team!

Dan lives near Atlantic on his family’s century-old farm with his trusty dog, Bubba. He hopes everyone knows about SWITA’s work routes and that they’ll take advantage of our transit services!

Atlantic Food Pantry Seeks Community Partners to Bolster Grant Award

The \$95,000 grant, which will help buy food for Cass County residents, is close to the total amount the pantry spent on food in 2021 (\$91,600). But more is needed, as the pantry is already seeing surging demand in 2022.

SWIPCO recently helped the city of Atlantic obtain a grant for funds that will help the Atlantic Food Pantry, a nonprofit that provides grocery items for area residents in need, deliver on its mission for the year.

The funding comes from an Iowa Economic Development Authority award of federal COVID-19 dollars and requires matching funds from the community to meet a growing need facing the community. To receive the entire grant amount, however, the Atlantic Food Pantry must raise a matching amount of \$25,000 to bolster the impact of the award. For every \$1 raised by the pantry, an additional \$4 becomes available from the grant for food purchases by the pantry, which makes local financial support extremely important.

“Grants are rarely, if ever, intended to replace an organization’s local fundraising,” said Alexis Fleener, SWIPCO Community Development Director. “Especially for an organization with an ongoing mission like the Atlantic Food Pantry, the need is greater than any single grant can meet, and that’s why it is crucial to partner with members of the community on a continuing basis.”

The Atlantic Food Pantry has distributed an increasing amount of food to Cass County residents experiencing food insecurity. Since 2019, the number served annually has tripled and the cost has increased by an even larger amount. The increased need for service was exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic when the community saw increased food insecurity. As the public health emergency ends, the need for food assistance remains but assistance programs are returning largely to pre-pandemic levels.

“With costs up across the board, particularly for food, we’ve actually seen the need and the client numbers increase in the past 2 months,” said Ken Burkhart, a volunteer leader with the Atlantic Food Pantry. “In line at the pantry, you can feel that.” Burkhart added, “We feel the pantry assistance is getting to the right population. Income surveys done to qualify for the grant show that the annual incomes of 82% of our client households are at or below the U.S. poverty level, and the rest are well below median family income for Cass County. The average annual income for all households is about \$13,500 and well over half the households are seniors.

The Atlantic Food Pantry has been serving the community since 1982. To become a community partner, send cash or check to “Atlantic Food Pantry” at 19 W 4th Street, Atlantic, IA 50022. Donations to the Atlantic Food Pantry are tax deductible. For more information, call 712-243-5019 during pantry hours on Mondays and Thursdays from 9-11.



Pictured above: Food sits ready to be bagged and distributed at the Atlantic Food Pantry. Due to limited space and increasing need, the pantry is seeking monetary support rather than traditional canned food donations at this time.

From the Desk of the Executive Director...

by John McCurdy

Kelly Davis never met a stranger and dedicated a big part of his life to helping the people of Southwest Iowa through his work at SWITA. He was intensely loyal to his drivers and genuinely cared about both our bus riders and the ones in the driver's seat.

He could cuss with amazing skill and use his bellowing voice to virtually reach through a phone line to someone on the other end to make sure they understood what he was saying. You didn't need an incident report to know that something was up when you heard Kelly's "Oh GAWD!!!" bursting out from the transit office.

When something was messed up he was not always happy with what you did, but in the end he was never malicious, he simply cared about his job and the people, and sometimes that meant a chewing out needed to be had and the bad needed to be flushed out of the good.

It is extremely fitting that Kelly's name is now a driver's award. It is also fitting that his service outside of these four walls is recognized. Kelly was a fixture in the Southwest Iowa sporting community.

I can remember him refereeing some of my own wrestling matches in high school. As an employer, I'm glad that many of our employees are involved in the community just like Kelly. Some coach, serve on the PTO, are active in their church, are dance moms, have started non-profits, and help in countless other ways. I think that caring for the community beyond work is important and we all benefit from having staff in our organization that genuinely care.

The last time I talked with Kelly was under a tree beyond the outfield fence of a freshman girls softball game—he didn't have any kids on the field, wasn't umpiring, but couldn't simply drive by a game without seeing how the kids were doing. We all miss him.

Birthdays & Anniversaries



Ann Anstey
Grants Specialist II
Birthday on May 1

Kristen Templeton
Transit Coordinator
Birthday on May 4



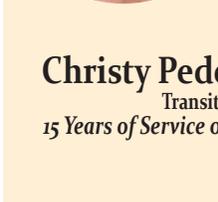
Alexis Fleener
Community Development Director
Birthday on May 10
7 Years of Service on May 27



Dani Briggs
Planning Technician II
Birthday on May 15
4 Years of Service on May 29



Dee Holtz
Administrative Assistant
Birthday on May 23



Christy Pederson
Transit Assistant
15 Years of Service on May 21



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

Alexis 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

Cindy Johnson
Transit Dispatcher

Matthew Lee
Building Inspector II

Nicole Rhodes
Grants Specialist II

Leslie Wright
Community Development Specialist

Teresa Wright
Finance Specialist