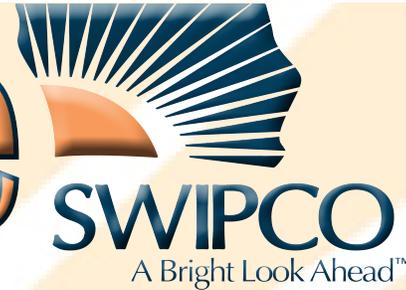


The Update



March 2022

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

Getting Close...

Hamburg's Missouri River levee nears completion

Nearly three years after a flood caused devastating damage to the city of Hamburg, its long-awaited Missouri River levee infrastructure is almost finished.

The levee will hold future flood waters at bay and includes a drainage system to route water back toward the river as levels recede.



Community Development Director Alexsis Fleener (center) speaks with members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during a recent pre-final walkthrough of the site.



Officials with Hendrickson Enterprises and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers inspect a drainage system during a recent visit to the site.

“Whenever we’ve needed help, SWIPCO has been there for us every step of the way,” said Hamburg City Clerk Sheryl Owen.

The \$10 million project includes a \$7.9 million federal Economic Development Administration grant SWIPCO helped Hamburg obtain in the period following the spring 2019 disaster.

SWIPCO routinely assists cities with grant applications, bringing over \$53 million to the southwest Iowa region in the last two years alone.

Save the Date

March 15 - SWIHTF Board Meeting at 1:30 p.m. via Zoom

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

March 30 - RPA-13 Technical Committee and Policy Council Meeting at 1:30 p.m. via Zoom

March 31 - Workforce Housing Tax Credit Application Workshop at 10:00 a.m.

April 14 - Historic Preservation Tax Credit Application Workshop at 10:30 a.m.

Application Workshops Sign up: <http://iowaeda.com/>

Recent Grant Awards

Missouri Valley - \$583,000 CDBG Disaster Recovery award to complete drainage ditch and roadway repairs.

Hamburg - \$547,000 CDBG Disaster Recovery award toward the construction of two new wells.

Modale - \$1.5 million CDBG Disaster Recovery award for lagoon updates and repairs.

Glenwood - \$27 million CDBG Disaster Recovery award to complete 120 new affordable housing units and accompanying infrastructure.

Hamburg - \$47 million CDBG Disaster Recovery award to complete 40 new affordable housing units and accompanying infrastructure.

Tabor - \$800,000 CDBG Disaster Recovery award to complete 6 new affordable housing units.

Malvern - \$15.3 million CDBG Disaster Recovery award to complete 44 new affordable housing units and accompanying infrastructure.

Woodbine - \$31.1 million CDBG Disaster Recovery award to complete 40 new affordable housing units and accompanying infrastructure.

Logan - \$750,000 CDBG Disaster Recovery award to complete 3 new affordable housing units and accompanying infrastructure.

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

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SWIPCO Grant Application Nets \$600k for Southwest Iowa Families Expansion

SWIPCO recently helped the city of Clarinda obtain a \$600,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the Iowa Economic Development Authority, which announced awards to cities last month.

“One in five persons will have a mental health diagnosis in their lifetime, so even if you’re not the one, you’ll have a family member or be close to someone who does,” said Southwest Iowa Families, Inc., Clinical Director Bernetta Wagoner. “With the stigma around mental illness becoming less, we’ve seen a 30% increase in the number of people seeking out mental health services per year.”

Wagoner said the agency simply did not have capacity to meet growing demand in the current building, and the CDBG dollars are a crucial piece of the funding puzzle for the long-awaited expansion project. The renovation and expansion will allow Southwest Iowa Families, Inc., to reduce overcrowding, reduce wait times for services, and allow staff to meet increased demand for mental health services in the southwest Iowa region.

Clarinda City Manager Gary McClarnon first en-

couraged the agency to partner with the regional council of governments. “Gary said, you know, you need to talk to SWIPCO,” said Wagoner. The city’s agreement to act as a fiscal agent for the CDBG award opened up additional funding for the Southwest Iowa Families, Inc., expansion project that otherwise would not have been available.

Southwest Iowa Families, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit providing several services to children and families including mental health, support for parents, and foster care after care services. The organization serves more than 1,000 clients from several southwest Iowa counties.

TRANSIT TALK



Kristen Templeton
Transit Coordinator

It happens every year: after false spring, the second bout of winter sets in and we start longing for the real spring, and then summer close behind.

Soon, it’ll be time to register for our Summer Fun Bus for the 2022 season! The Summer Fun Bus runs the day after school lets out until the first day of the following school year.

Whether your child needs to get to grandma’s house, a piano lesson, or the pool, we’ll get them there!

Summer Fun? Just add a bus!

Summer Fun Bus rides, available in Atlantic, Glenwood, Harland, Red Oak and Shenandoah, cost \$1 each way within city limits or \$40 for a season pass for unlimited rides.

For \$5 locally and \$10 for Omaha trips, riders can take part in Summer Fun Bus Excursions to Henry Doorly Zoo, putt-putt golf, the pool, or even a museum.

Watch our Facebook page and website for more information about this exciting summer program we get to offer with your support!

To sponsor rides for the Summer Fun Bus program, email kristen.templeton@swipco.org.



Artist’s rendition of the new of Southwest Iowa Families, Inc., facility in Clarinda.

CODE CONUNDRUMS

by Dani Briggs
Planning Technician II

Can a city specifically prohibit a sexually oriented business such as a strip club?

No. The 1st Amendment of the US Constitution places protections on freedom of speech and expression.

While many deem sexually oriented businesses as inappropriate, taboo, and fear they may lead to illegal activity, they are often considered “expressive content” and are protected under freedom of

speech and expression.

While sexually oriented businesses can't be prohibited, restrictions can be placed on where a business can be located within a community.

This could include buffer areas around schools, daycares, or residential districts. These buffers can only exist for the purpose of mitigating secondary effects of these businesses such as increased traffic or late-night noise.

Due to the potential legal scrutiny that comes with ordinances pertaining to the regulation of sexually oriented businesses, it is best to consult with your attorney when adopting or enforcing them.

As always, SWIPCO is here to help with questions you have about any ordinance you'd like to propose or adopt.



SWIPCO Staff Earn CDBG Grant Administrator Certification

The world is ever-changing, especially in the realm of grant administration. Every federal and state program has a number of specific requirements that must be met.

Good news: SWIPCO is certified to handle those requirements. More specifically, every SWIPCO staff member who works on any aspect of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) has gained certification as grant administrators through the Iowa Economic Development Authority.

The certification demonstrates an understanding of the in-depth state and federal requirements and regulations for various grant programs funded by IEDA.

Communities who receive CDBG funding must have a certified grant administrator (CGA) on staff or hire/procure a certified CDBG grant administrator to manage the CDBG award.

For our member communities, there is no need to look any further: SWIPCO has you covered! Our CGA's will help you navigate the process from start



Leslie Wright shows off the certificate she earned from the IEDA's training program.

to finish, from environmental reviews to proper reporting to close-out. With the help of a SWIPCO CGA, your city will effectively leverage its grant applications to do the most good possible.

SWIPCO staff who recently completed the CGA certification include Community Development Director Alexis Fleener; Grant Specialists Ann Anstey, Sandy Hansen and Tammy DeBord; Community Development Specialists Leslie Wright, Dani Briggs, and Mackenzie Bandow; and Building Inspectors Matthew Lee and Phil Richter.

SWIPCO Staff, Contractors Complete Lead Certification

Thanks to a recent HUD grant, several southwest Iowa contractors and SWIPCO staff members have been busy learning new skills.

SWIPCO's newly created \$1.4 million lead paint hazard reduction program will allow for lead hazard reduction in approximately 35 housing units and build a more skilled workforce in the region.

"This is really a great opportunity for us to get some of those lead hazards out of the way and make southwest Iowa a safer and healthier place to live for everyone, especially kids who are particularly vulnerable," said Nicole Rhodes, SWIPCO's lead project coordinator.

"The other side of it is that we're helping to get contractors certified to do the work. That outlasts this program and will continue to benefit the community in the years to come."

Along with Nicole, Building Inspectors Matthew Lee and Phil Richter attended the 40-hour Lead Abatement Contractor Initial Training Course, held in Des Moines the week of February 14-18.

SWIPCO also awarded three contractors with scholarships to attend the training that included lodging, meals, and compensation for lost work time.

Each contractor brought one or two employees who also became certified on lead abatement projects. Previously, no contractors in the SWIPCO region were certified to do lead abatement.

The lead paint abatement program prioritizes homes with children under six years of age who test with elevated blood levels for lead and must be in Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, or Shelby counties.



Building inspectors Phil Richter (left) and Matthew Lee (right) chat during the Lead Abatement Contractor Initial Training Course in February.

STAFF MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS

Kersten Abild didn't always expect to be answering the phone in the SWIPCO transit office. She was hired as a bus driver in the spring of 2021; by June, it was clear she had a knack for helping people, and she accepted a role as a Transit Dispatcher.

Some of her daily responsibilities include taking incoming calls from riders and placing outgoing calls to drivers, scheduling rides and other various customer service activities.

Kersten enjoys that every day in the transit office is different, but also that she gets to make a difference every day.

Kersten even goes above and beyond, recalling her CDL-certified driving skills and helping complete a bus route when needed.

Kersten lives in Atlantic with her better half, Forrest, and her two boys; Corbin, 19, and Dalton, 16. Along with Forrests' two girls, they've got a full house.

Kersten enjoys the outdoors, planting and tending to her gardens, camping, kayaking, and riding the motorcycle. If it's rainy outside, Kersten enjoys arts and crafts.

Join us in thanking Kersten for all that she does for SWIPCO!

Kersten Abild (below) speaks with a caller who wants to schedule a ride.



Cindy Johnson sits at her new desk at the front of the transit office.

We Warmly Welcome...

Visitors to the SWIPCO office in Atlantic will notice a new face in the transit office. Cindy Johnson began working with us as a Transit Dispatcher this month.

Cindy will answer calls, schedule rides, and help ensure great customer service for all our riders.

Welcome to the team, Cindy!

From the Desk of the Executive Director...

by John McCurdy

I'm not great at remembering dates. A recent example—I thankfully remembered that March 1 was my daughter's 16th birthday, and therefore 15 years since the biggest blizzard I can remember, but not that it was the 20th anniversary of my wife and I getting engaged (it snowed that day, too). But as fuzzy as my memory can be I do know that March is a big month here at SWIPCO.

It was March 13, 2019 that a delivery truck slid off of the highway and landed in my office—which was also the start of the Floods of 2019. March 17, 2020 was for us the effective start of the pandemic as things really ground to a halt.

March has held a lot of drama for us, but also a lot of hope. Although to those who lost homes and businesses it seems like eons, huge progress has been made in flood recovery. The Hamburg levee is just one example of a gigantic good that has come about because of the hard work of southwest Iowans and SWIPCO. Although at press time we can't quite announce the details, we will soon see a gigantic investment in new housing to replace homes lost in the flood.

I was hoping to be able to announce the end of the public transit mask mandate, but that has been extended to April 18—however, I have great faith that this will be the final extension of a rule that has served an important purpose, but has fallen upon our drivers and few else to enforce in our area.

March 18th is transit driver appreciation day. C.J. tells me this is because that's the date in the 1600's the first public coach service started up in Paris. Whatever the origin, I find it incredibly fitting that it happens right around the time of these big anniversaries for us.

It's a good time to not only thank our incredible transit drivers—who have not stopped provided essential services through floods and plagues—but to reflect on all that we have accomplished together and look forward to the good things that will come this spring.

Birthdays & Anniversaries



Mike Ballinger
Maintenance Assistant
2 Years of Service on Mar. 27



Leslie Wright
Community Development Specialist
2 Years of Service on Mar. 30



Kristine Stokes
Community Development Specialist
Birthday on Mar. 1

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

Cindy Johnson
Transit Dispatcher

Matthew Lee
Building Inspector II

Nicole Rhodes
Grants Specialist II

Leslie Wright
Community Development Specialist

Teresa Wright
Finance Specialist