



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SWIPCO holds 47th Annual Meeting

Seven partnership awards were presented during the SWIPCO annual meeting.

CLARINDA, IOWA – 50 stakeholders from diverse backgrounds gathered at the Lied Public Library in Clarinda on Thursday, September 22nd for Southwest Iowa Planning Council's (SWIPCO) 47th annual meeting and luncheon. The morning started off with a tour via SWITA buses of local success stories. Stops included the Clarinda Carnegie Art Museum, J's Pizza & Steakhouse, Weil's Clothing, Page County Courthouse, and the Glenn Miller Birthplace and Museum. The Lied Public Library, J's Pizza & Steakhouse, Weil's Clothing, and the Glenn Miller Museum had all been assisted with grant writing/administration by SWIPCO in the past.

Following the tour, a welcome from Clarinda Mayor Craig Hill, and lunch, the SWIPCO meeting kicked off with Todd Valline, SWIPCO Board Chair doing introductions. SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy and Transit Director Mark Lander presented seven partnership awards for entities that had a strong partnership with SWIPCO over the 2022 fiscal year. The awardees were:

Gilbert Thomas, Bank Iowa for his dogged promotion of Clarinda and the surrounding region in economic and housing development.

Bear Creek Archeology for their skill and efficiency in supporting Southwest Iowa grant applications under enormous time pressures due to Covid related and other funding sources with archeological services and vitally needed evaluations.

Curtis Architecture & Design for their skill and efficiency in supporting Southwest Iowa grant applications under enormous time pressures due to Covid related and other funding sources with architectural design services and historic preservation recommendations.

Clarinda Area Volunteers for providing over 4,000 rides a year to the residents of Clarinda for much needed transportation, including medical, shopping, and other vital trips near and far.

Iowa Economic Development Authority for steadfast partnership with SWIPCO to provide flood recovery, Covid recovery, and other economic development funds to Southwest Iowa.

Tom Shipley, Iowa Senate for being a constant advocate at the Statehouse for our region and in particular for always putting the needs of his constituents first.



Olmsted & Perry Consulting Engineers for decades of service to the region by providing invaluable expertise, often to some of the smallest communities, on community infrastructure projects and in congratulations for the gradual retirement of the owners, Jim Olmsted and Steve Perry.

SWIPCO staff were also recognized for years of service milestones: Ann Anstey (5 years) Rhonda Oliphant (5 years), Tammy DeBord (15 years) Sandy Hansen (15 years), and Christy Pederson (15 years). Richard Stehly was recognized as SWITA Driver of the Year. Also, former SWITA Fleet Manager Kelly Davis was posthumously recognized. Kelly passed away this year after retiring from 28 ½ years of service to the region.

SWIPCO and SWITA staff presented the annual report with highlights from the year from public transit, community development, revolving loan fund, and administrative services. SWITA Transit Director Mark Lander reported that SWITA provided 480,229 rides over the past year which is up from 377,547 rides provided in fiscal year 2021. This is the most rides by a rural public transit system in Iowa ever. “We are seeing a lot of growth in our work routes like Monogram and OSI, and I think we are on target to provide 500,000 rides by the end of fiscal year 2023,” Lander said. SWIPCO also routinely provides grant writing and administration services to its member communities in Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie, and Shelby Counties and brought over \$120 million in grants to the region in fiscal year 2022 alone.

Since its founding in 1975, Southwest Iowa Planning Council (SWIPCO), which also operates Southwest Iowa Transit Agency (SWITA) and the Southwest Iowa Housing Trust Fund (SWIHTF), has earned a reputation for being an outstanding community partner and transit provider in the region. SWIPCO was recognized as the 2022 Organization of Character by the Robert D. and Billie Ray Center at Drake University, which annually recognizes Iowans who show the Six Pillars of Character Counts: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. SWIPCO was also named a Des Moines Register Iowa Top Workplace for 2022.

SWIPCO is a council of governments serving the eight counties of southwest Iowa with public transportation, community development, and housing. SWIPCO is an equal opportunity employer, provider, and lender.

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Captions for attached images:

Image #1 – Partnership award being presented: SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy (left); Gilbert Thomas, Bank Iowa (right)



Image #2 – Partnership award being presented: Curtis Architecture & Design P.C. Rod Curtis (left); SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy; Curtis Architecture & Design P.C. Jacob Gockel (right)

Image #3 – Partnership award being presented: Transit Director Mark Lander (left); Clarinda Area Volunteers Patricia Bogdanski; Clarinda Area Volunteers Gretchen Sump; SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy (right)

Image #4 – Partnership award being presented: Tom Shipley, Iowa Senate (left); SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy (right)

Image #5 – Partnership award being presented: Jim Olmsted (left); SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy; Steve Perry (right)

Image #6 – Staff recognized for years of service milestones: Tammy DeBord (left); Rhonda Oliphant; Ann Anstey; SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy (right)

Image #7 – Driver of the Year recognized: Transit Director Mark Lander (left); Richard Stehly; SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy (right)