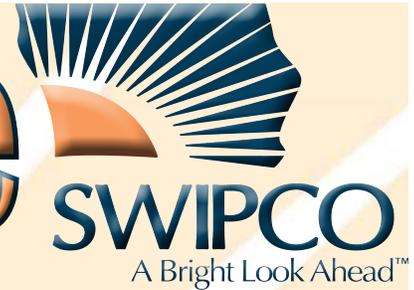


# The Update



September 2023

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

## Southwest Iowa Planning Council and partners celebrate housing recovery projects in Woodbine and Glenwood

Representatives from Southwest Iowa Planning Council (SWIPCO), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) along with developers and city officials in Woodbine and Glenwood came together to celebrate progress on Disaster Recovery housing projects on Tuesday, August 22nd. These projects are the fruit of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Disaster Recovery funding from the 2019 floods in Southwest Iowa.

The group first met in Woodbine to get a look at a 40 new home project that is nearing completion by Nu-Style Development Corporation. These new homes and supporting infrastructure will allow displaced flood victims an opportunity to return to an area they prefer to live at an affordable price. It will also benefit low to moderate income families that want to put down roots in the community. Non-flood impacted households can also apply.

The initial funding was available for communities and counties to apply for to support building new homes, rehabbing homes, and rebuilding vital infrastructure. The cities of Woodbine and Glenwood applied and then took bids for projects from developers.

They then selected developer projects that they felt best represented the communities' needs and got to work after project approval. Malvern, Tabor, Logan, and Hamburg also have active projects.



Touring in Woodbine

After their morning visit to Woodbine, representatives from SWIPCO, HUD, and IEDA traveled to view some projects in Glenwood with city officials and representatives of developer Mark Hughes Construction. Glenwood has multiple projects underway including 40 new homes in the Arbor Hills Development with Mark Hughes Construction and the Burr Oak Apartment Complex being developed by Travis Overhue.

SWIPCO Disaster Recovery Coordinator Ashley Hayes said "It is so rewarding to see these projects making progress to give individuals that were displaced by the flood a chance to move back to a small town. ...Continued on Page 2

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### Housing Recovery Projects Continued...

Many individuals that have applied have told us they had no choice but to move somewhere they didn't really want to and they are so happy to return to the area they love." Hayes said it takes community support to make these projects happen, "It's also so great to see the pride these communities have and their future vision for growth."



Touring in Glenwood

Over half of the homes in Woodbine have qualified families in the process of purchase. Developers receive a \$100,000 reimbursement to build the homes valued at around \$275,000 so they can be sold at a more affordable \$175,000 price tag. Hayes said some individuals have also worked with USDA to secure loans, which has been very helpful. Many of the spots in Glenwood also have buyers ready, as do some other smaller projects in Tabor.

If you or anyone you know has an interest in new homes being built in Woodbine, Logan, Glenwood, Malvern, Tabor, or Hamburg. Or if you are interested in new rental opportunities in Glenwood visit [www.swipco.org](http://www.swipco.org) and follow the link on the home page for more information. If you have additional questions call 712-243-4196. SWIPCO is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

### SWITA Receives FTA Region 7 Iowa Rural Ridership

Southwest Iowa Transit Agency (SWITA) was recognized as the Iowa rural public transit system with the largest ridership in fiscal year 2021 by the Federal Transit Administration during the Breakfast of Transit Champions at the 2023 Midwest Transit Conference in Kansas City on September 8th.

SWITA has continued to show tremendous growth in ridership despite the decline many other agencies have seen since the pandemic. The award itself was delayed because of the pandemic. For the award year (2021) SWITA provided 377,547 rides. SWITA will hold the title for 2022 and 2023 as well with 480,229 rides and an unprecedented 526,300 rides respectively. Workforce ridership is one specific area of growth for SWITA and ridership has more than doubled from fiscal year 2020 at 43,363 rides to fiscal year 2023 at 99,286 rides. SWITA transportation is available for all residents in Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie and Shelby counties.



### SWITA FTA Award Continued....

SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy said, “Awards because of big numbers are nice, but what is really important is what those numbers represent. SWITA is getting people in Southwest Iowa where they need to go—including to work, school, and medical appointments. The SWITA staff bend over backwards to meet the needs of our clients because they know every trip is important to that client.”

SWITA offers taxi services in Atlantic, Glenwood, Harlan, Missouri Valley, Red Oak, and Shenandoah and student transportation for students not served by the regular school bus in Atlantic, Glenwood, Harlan, and Red Oak. Medical trips are available within the counties of Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie, and Shelby Counties. SWITA provides work route transportation for employees of Monogram Foods, OSI, and cleaning crews. Vanpool option is available for individuals living in or around Red Oak, Iowa going to work in Harlan. Summer Fun Bus is another service offered in towns where taxi services are offered.

SWITA Transit Director Mark Lander said, “SWITA is one of the few Rural Public Transit Agencies in Iowa that has routes running 24/7 and we were the only public transit agency in the state that saw ridership gains during the pandemic. This award is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the men and women at SWITA that work day in and day out to get the people of Southwest Iowa where they need to go!”

SWITA transportation is accessible to everyone including the disabled population and elderly. SWITA vehicles are equipped with wheelchair accessibility and one personal care attendant rides free. SWITA transportation is affordable: taxi rides are \$2.50 per trip or \$2.00 per trip for elderly clients (60 years and older) with collaboration from Connnections Area Agency on Aging; medical trips are \$30 per hour; Summer Fun Bus rides are \$1 per trip or \$40 for the full summer; other special trips are \$40 per hour.



### SWITA by the Numbers

	August 2023	YTD (Since July 1)
Total Miles	176,507	344,052
Total Hours	11,419	44,559
Total Rides	44,559	85,183

	Per Service August 2023	August Rides Breakdown
Workforce Rides	7,647	Disabled 26,093
Taxi Rides	5,148	Elderly 2,952
Student Rides	1,326	OtherGeneralPublic 15,514

## New Faces Join SWIPCO Team

### Barb Boggs welcomed as new Grants Specialist for SWIPCO

SWIPCO welcomes Barb Boggs as a Grants Specialist. She will work with SWIPCO Disaster Recovery Planning to help with citizen claims and surveying for the agency. Barb will help clients navigate through application procedures and ensure the agency is meeting grant regulations.



Boggs has lived the majority of her life in Atlantic and graduated from Atlantic High School. She has a varied background with work in financing, a law office, the postal service, and more. “I enjoy helping people and look forward to doing a lot of that with this position”, said Boggs.

SWIPCO and the Southwest Iowa Housing Trust Fund operate a wide range of programs including housing repair, down payment assistance, demolition of dilapidated houses, and lead abatement. SWIPCO also provides building inspection services and currently has more than 1,500 rental units in its inspection program. Boggs will assist with all of these programs and will be an asset to the agency.

### Julie Hays Added to Transit Staff as Scheduler



SWITA welcomes Julie Hays as a Transit Scheduler. Julie will join the team that connects area residents to the transportation they need.

“I can see that this is a valuable and much needed service for the area,” said Hays. Julie has a background in customer service with Hy-Vee Wine and Spirits, Johnson Brothers Wine, and Nutrien Ag Solutions. Hays said, “This job was appealing to me since it was an opportunity to stay in customer service.”

SWITA serves eight counties in Southwest Iowa with a fleet of 100 vehicles. Transportation provided includes work routes, student transportation, day habilitation routes for disabled individuals, medical transport, and a range of other services.

### Chris Parks Joins SWIPCO as Communications Coordinator

SWIPCO welcomes Chris Parks to our staff in the role of Communications Coordinator. Chris will oversee community outreach, public engagement, and media communications for SWIPCO and SWITA. He will work to increase awareness of public transit services in order to better connect the people of the Southwest Iowa region to employment, school, and wherever they need to go.



“Southwest Iowa has been home for me most of my life and I’ve been lucky enough to have a great connection with many people in the region from my upbringing and time with KJAN,” said Parks. “SWIPCO is involved with so many things that make life better for residents of the region and I am excited to have the opportunity to share those stories and help people connect with the services they need.”

Parks is a graduate of Glenwood High School and has a bachelor’s degree in Broadcasting from the University of Nebraska at Kearney. He has journalism experience as a broadcaster for 16 years at KJAN Radio in Atlantic. He resides in Atlantic with his wife Mandy and their children Carson and Greta.

### Mike Ballinger fills new Safety Coordinator Role

#### Birthdays & Anniversaries



**Tammy DeBord**  
Grants Specialist III  
Birthday Month September

**Teresa Wright**  
Finance Specialist  
17 Years of Service



**Mark Hansen**  
Fleet Mechanic  
15 Years of Service

**Ann Anstey**  
Grants Specialist II  
6 Years of Service



**Aaron Koontz**  
Grants Specialist I  
1 Year of Service

SWIPCO has created the new role of Safety Coordinator and Mike Ballinger has moved into that position.

In this new role Ballinger will oversee SWIPCO's safety programs, especially those that relate to transit driver and rider safety. These roles have been shared among staff in the past but coordinating them under one position has long been a goal.



### SWIPCO is Hiring

#### Community Development Specialist II

Do you like to be out in the community helping local leaders and stakeholders solve complex problems? Do you want a career that is diverse and challenging? Do you have a background in local government, planning, or economic development? Are you organized and get excited about seeing a project you helped start become a reality? If this sound like you, consider becoming a community development specialist at SWIPCO. Full job posting is available on our website at: <https://www.swipco.org/career-opportunities-rfp-s/>

#### Maintenance Assistant

Southwest Iowa Planning Council (SWIPCO) is looking for a Maintenance Assistant to join our team. The main responsibility is to ensure the cleanliness of SWITA vehicles and preserve the excellent condition and functionality of our business premises. Duties include cleaning and sanitizing vehicles, performing maintenance on SWIPCO buildings and grounds, shuttling vehicles, and filling-in as a transit driver. The position involves a considerable amount of independent work and travel between Atlantic and Council Bluffs and other areas within SWIPCO's region. This is a full-time position with a starting wage of \$17/hour. Full job posting is available on our website at: <https://www.swipco.org/career-opportunities-rfp-s/>

# From the Desk of the Executive Director...

**John McCurdy**  
Executive Director

As you can see from this newsletter recovery from the Floods of 2019 is very much an ongoing effort. Huge resources are being dedicated to what is by far the largest single group of projects that SWIPCO housing and planning staff have ever worked on, and will continue to be for the foreseeable future. However, it is important to note that most of our cities and counties are not directly involved in this disaster recovery and SWIPCO continues to serve a wide range of projects around the region. Grant writing and administration is a particular emphasis and I want to take this opportunity to remind all of our members throughout the area that in most cases grant writing is a free service that SWIPCO provides to members. Likewise, some grants come with significant administrative burdens and we can assist with those as well. If you have a need in the community, it's always worth a phone call to the office and we'd be more than happy to help. That is not a promise that there are grants for every need, but quite regularly we are contacted and have experience in the particular area of need.

### Interested in Being Involved?

SWIPCO currently has vacancies on our policy council, housing trust fund, and revolving loan fund boards. Contact Executive Director John McCurdy if you have an interest in any vacancy.

### Upcoming Grant Information:

- IEDA CDBG Sewer/Water Grant  
-Due October 1
- IEDA CDBG Downtown Revitalization Fund.  
-Taking applications through November 22nd
- Federal Recreational Trails Grant  
- Due October 1

## YOU'RE INVITED

The 2023 SWIPCO Annual Meeting is being held on Thursday, September 28th at the Hamburg Fire Department. Tour of Hamburg at 9:00 a.m. and Lunch and Annual Meeting at Noon. RSVP by sending an email to [swipco@swipco.org](mailto:swipco@swipco.org)

## SWIPCO STAFF

**John McCurdy, AICP**  
Executive Director

**Mark Lander**  
Transit Director

**Erin Hudson**  
Community Development Director

**Karen Mauer**  
Administrative Services Director

**Rhonda Brown**  
Finance Manager

**Daurine Petersen**  
Human Resources Coordinator

**Kersten Abild**  
Transit Scheduler II

**Ann Anstey**  
Grants Specialist II

**Mary Auten**  
Grants Specialist I

**Michael Ballinger**  
Safety Coordinator

**Barb Boggs**  
Grants Specialist I

**Dani Briggs**  
Lead Planner

**Tracy Clark**  
Transit Scheduler III

**Tammy DeBord**  
Grants Specialist III

**Mark Hansen**  
Fleet Mechanic

**Sandy Hansen**  
Grants Specialist III

**Ashley Hayes**  
Disaster Recovery Coordinator

**Julie Hays**  
Transit Scheduler I

**Dee Holtz**  
Administrative Assistant

**Aaron Koontz**  
Grants Specialist I

**Matthew Lee**  
Building Inspector II

**Chris Parks**  
Communications Coordinator

**Christy Pederson**  
Transit Reporting Coordinator

**Nicole Rhodes**  
Grants Specialist II

**Phil Richter**  
Building Inspector I

**Kristen Templeton**  
Transit Coordinator

**Teresa Wright**  
Finance Specialist