

The Update



March/April 2024

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

SWIPCO Celebrates Completion of Building Addition

Atlantic, IA – Southwest Iowa Planning Council (SWIPCO) is celebrating the completion of an addition to their main office in Atlantic. SWIPCO and Southwest Iowa Transit Agency continue to grow, providing more services and working on more projects than ever that benefit the residents of Southwest Iowa.



SWIPCO Board and Staff at the Ribbon Cutting

The growing demand for SWIPCO services caused SWIPCO to outgrow the previous office space. An area designed for seven employees was housing 17 workers. To remedy that problem a 60'x30' addition was planned onto the east side of the building and has now been completed.

The space is an open office area that now houses planning and housing team members along with communications and safety coordinators. During construction many of these individuals were working out of a temporary, rented office space nearby.

SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy described the value of the new space, “We’ve needed to expand our office space in Atlantic for a long time and had the first concept plans actually drawn up in 2017. Pre-Covid we had already turned our conference room into workspace for several employees. Covid taught us a lot about how we function, both that we could be more flexible with remote work options but also that we need in person, onsite capacity to serve our clients. This addition enables us to make the best use of the space we have here and will be flexible for future changes and keep our operations on one site in Atlantic. We also added an additional women’s restroom, which may not sound like a big thing but with 22 female employees at this location was very much a priority!”

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New Addition Continued.....

Reorganization of office space will also allow for more functionality of previous spaces. The conference room will once again be able to be utilized for Policy Council and other meetings after being used for office space for over five years.

Construction was completed by Building Crafts Inc. of Red Oak and began in early 2023. The much-anticipated completion will help SWIPCO continue to support the whole region for the long term. In total SWIPCO employs over 100 people, with about 30 in the office in Atlantic.

SWIPCO celebrated the new space with Policy Council Members after their meeting on March 28th.



Addition Pre-Move In



Addition Post-Move and Operational



New Addition Exterior

More applicants needed for Lead Hazard Reduction Grant

SWIPCO has funds available and is seeking more applicants for its Lead Hazard Reduction Grant. This program applies to homes constructed before 1978 and have children under the age of 6 who reside or spend a significant amount of time in the home. Rental units may qualify as well if the owner gives preference to a family with children under age 6. Vacant rentals are also eligible. Rental unit owners must match 10% of the project cost. Work that is eligible includes exterior and/or interior improvements involving lead-based paint removal and other items necessary to make the home safe and healthy. Homeowners must meet income guidelines and live in Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, or Shelby counties. Grants have averaged approximately \$30,000.

Lead is highly neurotoxic and lead poisoning is 100% preventable, but the effects of lead poisoning are irreversible. The Centers for Disease Control reports that there is no safe lead level and a level of 3.5 micrograms/deciliter is considered a high blood level of lead. Testing for elevated lead levels in children continues to be emphasized in Iowa. Children under 6 are more sensitive to lead and pregnant women exposed to lead can pass lead to their unborn baby. Lead gets into the body when it is inhaled or swallowed, and lead poisoning can lead to significant and long-term health effects. Lead poisoning affects 1 in 14 Iowa children and Iowa's rate of lead poisoning is four times the national average. Nearly 60% of the homes in Iowa both in rural and urban areas were built before 1960.

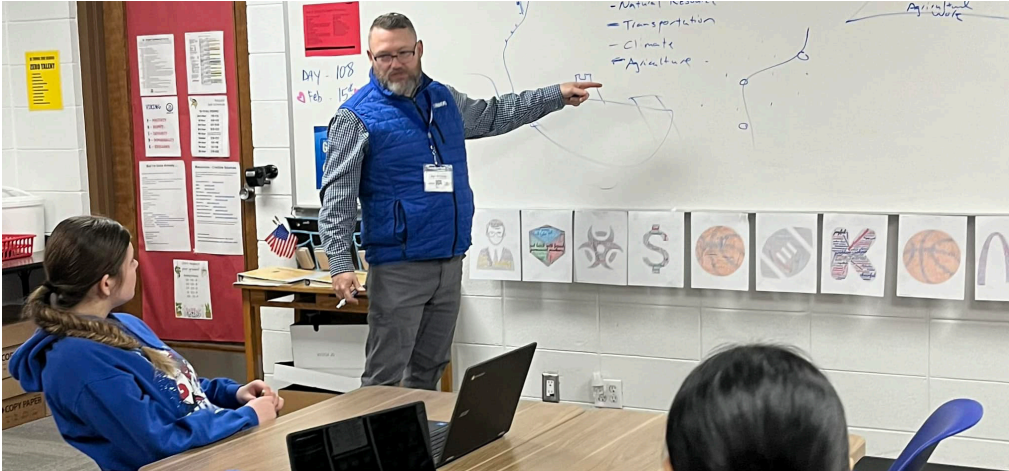


Lead Hazard Reduction Program Coordinator Nicole Rhodes said, "This is a wonderful opportunity to help us get some of those lead hazards removed to make southwest Iowa a safer and healthier place to live for everyone, especially kids who are particularly vulnerable. Through this grant program we have already been able to get 4 contractors in the southwest Iowa area certified as Lead Safe Contractors, which will ensure that lead poisoning awareness and abatement will outlast this program and will continue to benefit the community for future generations."

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Applications are needed as soon as possible to have lead issues addressed in 2024. To apply or to learn more about the grant program, please contact SWIPCO Lead Hazard Reduction Program Coordinator, Nicole Rhodes, at 712-243-4196 or 866-279-4720 ext. 240 or by emailing nicole.rhodes@swipco.org.

AHSTW Students Learn About City Planning, Code, and Zoning Laws



AHSTW Future Business Leaders of America Club hosted SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy at Mr. Sargent’s Entrepreneurship Class to learn about city planning, code, zoning laws, and career opportunities.

SWITA is Hiring

Atlantic, Harlan, Red Oak, and Shenandoah Area Drivers Wanted

Southwest Iowa Transit Agency (SWITA) is seeking part-time drivers in the Atlantic, Harlan, Red Oak and Shenandoah areas for a number of shifts. Applicants must possess or be willing to acquire a commercial driver’s license class C with passenger endorsement (SWITA will assist with ELDT and drive test), and enjoy working with the public. Starting wage is \$16.00 per hour plus IPERS and PTO. Applicant must be able to obtain a CDL Medical Exam and pass a DOT pre-employment drug screen.

More information and the ability to apply online for this position is located on www.swita.com.

For questions contact Daurine Petersen at 800-842-8065. Please apply online or send the application to SWIPCO, Attn: Daurine, 1501 SW 7th St., Atlantic, Iowa, 50022 or email to daurine.petersen@swipco.org.

SWIPCO is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



SWITA by the Numbers

	February 2024	YTD (Since July 1)	
Total Miles	181,465	1,212,906	
Total Hours	10,182	69,756	
Total Rides	49,206	363,808	
<u>February Rides by Service</u>		<u>February Rides by Demographic</u>	
Workforce Rides	7,360	Disabled	25,145
Taxi Rides	4,881	Elderly	2,454
Student Rides	7,708	Other Gen. Public	21,607
Other	29,257		

McCurdy travels to Washington D.C. to Support Economic Development Reauthorization Act

SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy recently traveled to Washington D.C. with members of the National Association of Development Organizations to encourage members of Congress to support the Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024. This legislation, if enacted, would reauthorize the US Economic Development Administration for the first time in nearly 20 years. The bill contains many of the priorities for EDA reauthorization that are of paramount importance for NADO members and EDA-designated Economic Development Districts.



(L-R) Nichole Moore, Chariton Valley Planning and Development; Congressman Zach Nunn; John McCurdy; Denise Bulat, Bi-State Regional Commission.



March 12, 2024 Senate hearing on EDA reauthorization

SWITA Celebrates Transit Staff for National Transit Employee Appreciation Day



Southwest Iowa Transit Agency spent a week celebrating all the staff in concert with National Transit Employee Appreciation Day on March 22, 2024. Transit leadership and office staff traveled to different hub cities in our service area to share some breakfast and fellowship with drivers in the area.

Stops were made in Shenandoah, Glenwood, Red Oak, Harlan, and Council Bluffs. Weather got in the way of staff getting to Missouri Valley and we capped things off on March 22nd at the office in Atlantic. Thanks to everyone that made it out and thanks again to all SWITA staff for all you do to help area residents get where they need to go.



Interested in Being Involved?

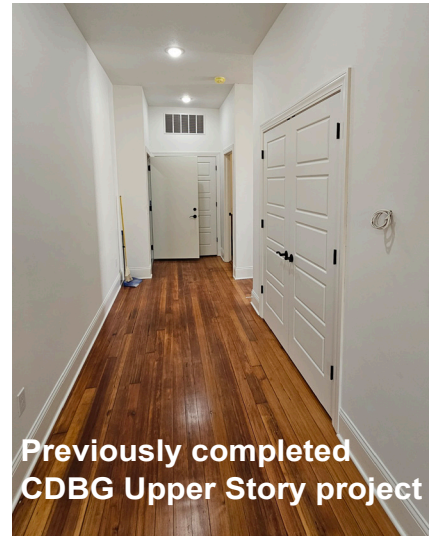
SWIPCO currently has vacancies on our housing trust fund and revolving loan fund boards. Contact Executive Director John McCurdy if you have an interest in any vacancy.

Upcoming Grant Information:

- FHLB Affordable Housing Program. May 1, 2024
- Iowa West Foundation LOI: May 1, 2024 Final: May 15, 2024
- Iowa Arts Project Grant. May 15, 2024
- Iowa Cultural Capacity Building Program. May 15, 2024
- Iowa Thriving Communities. May 15, 2024
- Land and Water Conservation Fund Program. June 15, 2024
- Iowa Workforce Housing Tax Incentive Program June 10, 2024
- IDNR Land and Water Conservation Fund June 15, 2024
- IEDA Enhance Iowa Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) Grant June 15, 2024

IEDA Opens One More Round of CDBG Upper Story Funding

The Iowa Economic Development Authority has announced that one last round of Community Development Block Grant Upper Story Funding will be opening up. There will be no 2024 CDBG funds allocated to this program so now is the time to get applications in.



The application window is expected to be open from May 1, 2024 to June 30, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. They are hoping to award project funds sometime in August depending on the number of applications received.

If you have a project in mind then contact Tammy DeBord at SWIPCO to obtain more information and get the application process started. Email tammy.debord@swipco.org or call 712-243-4196 ext. 234.

Birthdays & Anniversaries



Brandie McFarland
Human Resource Specialist
Birthday Month March



John McCurdy
Executive Director
11 Years of Service



Aaron Koontz
Grants Specialist I
Birthday Month April



Kersten Abild
Transit Scheduler II
3 Years of Service



Mark Lander
Transit Director
Birthday Month April



Teresa Wright
Finance Specialist
Birthday Month April

CADCO Recognizes SWIPCO at Annual Meeting

Atlantic, IA- Southwest Iowa Planning Council was honored to be recognized by the Cass/Atlantic Development Corporation at their annual meeting on April 9th. SWIPCO was recognized as their non-profit organization of the year.

Part of this honor was specifically in relation to work on a Community Attraction and Tourism Grant for the Atlantic splash pad project. The Atlantic Splash Pad Committee, with SWIPCO assistance, was able to secure a \$102,047 CAT grant for the approximately 4,500 square foot aquatic venue. The grant helped push the fundraising efforts up to the \$690,000 needed for construction. Community Development Director Erin Hudson worked on a tight timeline to get the application in on time and SWIPCO was thrilled to see the award come through.



(L-R) CADCO President Steve Tjepkes, CADCO Executive Director Jennifer McEntaffer, SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy, SWIPCO Grants Specialist Tammy DeBord, SWIPCO Disaster Recovery Coordinator Ashley Hayes

SWIPCO has also been involved with CDBG upper-story renovation projects in Atlantic in the past year and numerous other projects in the area.

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 routinely provides grant writing and administration services to its member communities in Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie, and Shelby Counties.

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

Gina Gentile
Transit Scheduler I

Mark Hansen
Fleet Mechanic

Sandy Hansen
Grants Specialist III

Ashley Hayes
Disaster Recovery Coordinator

Julie Hays
Transit Scheduler I

Dee Holtz
Administrative Assistant

Holly Jackson
Planner I

Amy Jones
Benefits & Payroll Specialist

Adam Kisner
Maintenance Assistant

Aaron Koontz
Grants Specialist I

Matthew Lee
Building Inspector II

Brandie McFarland
Human Resources Specialist

Chris Parks
Communications Coordinator

Nicole Rhodes
Grants Specialist II

Phil Richter
Building Inspector I

Kristen Templeton
Transit Coordinator

Teresa Wright
Finance Specialist