



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SWIPCO holds 49th Annual Meeting in Harlan

Three partnership awards presented and recap of SWIPCO's year

HARLAN, IOWA- Southwest Iowa Planning Council (SWIPCO) hosted members, staff, and supporters for their 49th Annual Meeting on Thursday, September 12th at the C.G. Therkildsen Center in Harlan. The gathering included a luncheon, awards presentation, and annual report presentation.

Three partnership awards were presented in recognition of individuals, organizations, and businesses that help SWIPCO achieve their goals of serving the residents of Southwest Iowa.

Harbin Construction of Tarkio, MO was recognized for their continued contract work on SWIPCO housing projects. SWIPCO helped put Harbin through certified lead abatement training and they have since worked on many lead hazard reduction projects. Ten Harbin and his team have done a wonderful job of working through program requirements and providing homeowners with a safe and proper end-product.

Dee Fischer with USDA Rural Development has been a wonderful asset to collaborate with and make projects happen in the region. She truly is a servant of the people whose actions speak volumes about her drive to make sure that our part of the country receives at least its fair share of resources, if not maybe a bit more. For many years she has been the reason that many projects in this part of the state have been able to successfully stack USDA and CDBG funds together, as well as many other funding combinations.

3HO has provided a great opportunity for many disabled individuals to do meaningful work. The company works with companies to put together and package materials. They also grow locally grown produce to sell in the area. SWITA has partnered with 3HO to provide transportation for employees to their Lewis facility. Chris Jahnke and his crew have been great partners that have positively impacted the community in many ways.

Also, during the meeting four SWIPCO employees were recognized for milestone work anniversaries. Awards were presented to Mark Lander, Transit Director for 10 years of service; Kristen Templeton, Transit Coordinator for 10 years of service; Tracy Clark, Transit Scheduler III



for 5 years of service; and Matthew Lee, Inspector II for 5 years of service. SWITA Driver of the Year Steve Herrington was also recognized.

A special part of the day was reserved for honoring former policy council member Ron Kohn, who passed away last year. Glenwood City Administrator Amber Farnan shared some memories of working with Ron in his role as Mayor of Glenwood. Ron was a dedicated educator and public servant, and he will be dearly missed. SWIPCO plans to honor Ron's legacy moving forward with the presentation of the Ron Kohn Servant Leadership Award starting at the 50th Annual Meeting next year.

SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy presented the annual report, outlining another impactful year of work. SWIPCO and the Southwest Iowa Housing Trust Fund worked on over 70 homes in the last fiscal year between repair programs and homeownership assistance. 170 building code inspections were completed, 3 lead abatement projects completed, and 10 dilapidated houses demolished. Disaster recovery work continued with 139 new housing units with accompanying infrastructure completed. A total of 16 community development projects were finished in fiscal year 2024 worth \$49,162,107. Southwest Iowa Transit Agency completed another record ridership year, providing 552,231 rides in the region. That number topped last year's previous record mark of 542,457 rides.

SWIPCO has continued to grow and adapt to meet the needs of the region and part of that effort this past year has included two new positions created and a new addition to the Atlantic office. A 60' x 30' addition was added to the east side of the building and now houses much of the housing and planning teams. The new roles of Safety Coordinator and Building Permits Technician were created to meet SWITA's growing ridership and SWIPCO's growing role assisting communities with building codes and permits.

SWIPCO is proud of the accomplishments of the past year and looks forward to helping the region continue to thrive moving forward. SWIPCO, founded in 1975, is a council of governments serving eight counties in Southwest Iowa with public transportation, community development, and housing assistance. Counties served are Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie, and Shelby. SWIPCO is an equal opportunity employer, provider, and lender. You can download and view the SWIPCO Annual Report here: <https://www.swipco.org/publications/annual-report/>

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Photo Captions:

Image #1 Partnership Award presentation (L-R): Barb Boggs, SWIPCO Grants Specialist I; Holly Jackson, SWIPCO Planner; Mary Auten, SWIPCO Grants Specialist I; Nicole Rhodes, SWIPCO Lead Hazard Reduction Program Coordinator; Tammy DeBord, SWIPCO Grants Specialist III; Dee Fischer, USDA Rural Development; John McCurdy, SWIPCO Executive Director; Ashley Hayes; SWIPCO Disaster Recovery Coordinator; Erin Hudson; SWIPCO Community Development Director; Dani Briggs, SWIPCO Lead Planner; Allie Strauss, SWIPCO Building Permit Technician I.

Image #2 Partnership Award presentation (L-R): Mark Lander, SWITA Transit Director; Chris Jahnke, Owner 3HO LLC; Patty Barker, 3HO Team Member; Joe Schafers, 3HO Team Member; John McCurdy, SWIPCO Executive Director; Todd Valline; SWIPCO Policy Council Chair.

Image #3 Harlan Mayor Jay Christensen delivers the welcome address to the meeting attendees.