

# The Update

August 2025

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



## Hastings and Little Sioux Awarded CDBG Water Grants

HASTINGS & LITTLE SIOUX– Southwest Iowa Planning Council (SWIPCO) recently aided the communities of Hastings and Little Sioux with successful Community Development Block Grant applications for water/sewer projects.

Little Sioux has been awarded \$500,000 for a high need project that will update their water mains. Many of the community's water mains are a small diameter and prone to breakage. Also, due to their small size they don't work well, if at all, for fire protection. This issue has caused insurance premiums for residents to skyrocket due to the high fire risk. This grant will help fund updating the water mains to make them the proper size and they will also install a new elevated storage tank, new aerator, and new detention tank. This important project will both improve water quality and fire protection capability, in turn improving insurance costs for residents.



The City of Mondamin's new water treatment plant project used CDBG funds, similar to the Hastings project.

Hastings was awarded a \$418,125 CDBG grant for a new water treatment plant. The city currently does not have a full fledged treatment plant. They currently dump disinfectant in by hand and there is a lack of processing for other contaminants in the water system. This project will give the community the proper tools to improve water quality for many years to come.

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Before and after treatment

## SWIPCO Housing Team Takes Pride in Keeping Southwest Iowans in their Homes

ATLANTIC- SWIPCO has worked on home repair projects to aid Southwest Iowa residents in need throughout its history. This work gets done through the collaboration of funding partners, the SWIPCO housing office staff, SWIPCO inspectors in the field, and contractor partners doing the work.

SWIPCO and the Southwest Iowa Housing Trust Fund (SWIHTF) use a variety of funding sources to try to address housing repair needs for low-income residents of the region. Those that have needs are

often directed to SWIPCO from cities and counties or other resources, and then they are added to a waiting list to determine eligibility and possibly get assistance.



Before and after photos of a housing rehab project in Villisca

In the office, Ann Anstey took on the role this year of Housing Programs Coordinator and Nicole Rhodes is a Grants Specialist who oversees the Lead Hazard Reduction Program. Rhodes said, "The goal is to help people be able to stay in their homes. We want them to be able to stay living in the region."

Anstey said helping people remain in their homes involves, "Making sure their home is safe. We try to address issues affecting health, energy efficiency, and minimum housing standards. Our inspectors do a great job of identifying those needs." SWIPCO has two Inspectors, Matthew Lee and Phil Richter. Building Permits Technician Allie Strauss works with them and communities on codes and inspections.

It can be a challenge slogging through the paperwork process with those in need due to varying program requirements, technology barriers, and evolving rules but Anstey said it's ultimately worth it when you have a grateful recipient, "It's very rewarding to hear from people that have been helped that are just so grateful that work could be done that they had no way of accomplishing on their own. It can really impact people's quality of life."

Both Anstey and Rhodes praised the entire team they work with. Rhodes said, "We have a lot of great contractors that work with us and they keep coming back to work with us so I think that says something." Anstey added, "We have a good working team in place. Everyone knows their roles and that typically makes us pretty efficient throughout each project."

SWIPCO has rehabilitated 1,706 homes throughout the region during 50 years of service. In the past ten years alone, the value of rehabilitation has been \$8,462,938. This work doesn't happen without great people and we hope this provides some perspective from the office staff arm of the housing team.



## SWITA Rolls Into New School Year

ATLANTIC- Southwest Iowa Transit Agency (SWITA) has started rolling the wheels for student transportation for the 2025-26 academic year.

SWITA staff have been helping families get their students signed up via online registration, phone assistance, in the office, and at some events. Staff made an appearance at Produce in the Park in Atlantic on August 7th with information on registration, other service information, and some fun giveaways. Transit staff also made a visit to a back to school event in Atlantic as well to help provide guidance.



SWITA booth at Produce in the Park

SWITA operates student transportation services in Atlantic, Glenwood, Red Oak, and Harlan. If you are not served by the school district bus system and would like to sign up for student transportation you can do so online at [swita.com](http://swita.com), where you can also find a paper registration or contact the office at 712-243-2518.

Rides are \$1.75 one-way and a starting balance of \$30 is requested at registration. After registration and payment are received, riders will be able to ride following two business days.

### 09.25.25

#### **SWIPCO ANNUAL MEETING 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

CASS COUNTY COMMUNITY CENTER  
805 W 10<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
ATLANTIC, IA  
DINNER, PROGRAM, AND AWARDS  
STARTS AT 6:00 P.M.

WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO CELEBRATING 50  
YEARS OF SERVICE TO SOUTHWEST IOWA.

CITY, COUNTY, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL  
REPRESENTATIVES ARE INVITED TO REGISTER TO  
ATTEND THROUGH THE LINK ON THE HOMEPAGE  
AT [WWW.SWIPCO.ORG](http://WWW.SWIPCO.ORG) OR USE THE QR CODE  
BELOW.



## SWIPCO Administrative Services Department Helps Move the Team Forward

ATLANTIC- One of the departments that operates largely behind the scenes at SWIPCO is the Administrative Services Department. This team helps keep SWIPCO moving forward by touching all departments of the organization and operates hiring, benefits, and finance.

Daurine Petersen stepped into the role of Administrative Services Director in the summer of 2024 and has been with SWIPCO for 14 years. She said it's an enjoyable roll to be in because they get to be in a little bit of everything. The department also includes Brandie McFarland, Human Resource Specialist; Rhonda Brown, Finance Manager; Teresa Wright, Finance Specialist; Dee Holtz, Administrative Assistant; and Chris Parks, Communications Coordinator.

Petersen spent her first nine years in transit and then became the Human Resources Director in 2020 before eventually taking on her current role last year. This has allowed her to see many changes over the years and she is proud of many things, "We have seen so much growth in transit, housing, and planning. I think we have a great team and we've really improved our efficiencies and evolved with the changing times, especially when it comes to technology. We have gone from just pen and paper to many advanced systems."

When asked about some of the specific projects or roles she enjoyed Petersen said, "In transit I helped with outreach and getting the workroutes going. It's been very rewarding to see that service grow into the valuable piece it is to the employees, employers, and us. I also enjoyed being that welcoming face for our staff and getting to know them as people. I try to be a positive part of their day for whatever reason they need to come to me for."

The list of tasks various members of this department accomplish are far too numerous to spell out in this article. Hiring and training staff, processing payroll, keeping up with benefits, managing the finances, and often being the first interaction for the public with SWIPCO are just naming a few things.

Petersen reiterated having a great team overall boasts well for the future, "Needs are always changing and I feel like we try to do a great job of evolving. There are still great things on the horizon for the region, and we are ready to make an impact."

SWIPCO is celebrating 50 years of service to Southwest Iowa this year and we hope you enjoyed this little bit of insight into one department and role.





## *Birthdays & Anniversaries*

**Chris Parks**

Communications Coordinator

Birthday Month  
2 Years of Service**Phil Richter**Building Inspector I  
Birthday Month**John McCurdy**Executive Director  
Birthday Month**Julie Hays**Transit Scheduler I  
Birthday Month**Kristen Templeton**Transit Coordinator  
11 Years of Service**Barb Boggs**Grants Specialist I  
2 Years of Service**Mark Lander**Transit Director  
11 Years of Service

### 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:

- Arts Project Grant  
September 23, 2025
- Iowa Tourism Grant  
September 30, 2025
- Grow, Invest, Gather (GIG)  
Fund Arts and Wellness  
Grants  
September 30, 2025
- Iowa DNR Solid Waste Alternatives Program  
September 30, 2025
- Iowa DNR Water Recreation Access Cost-Share Program  
September 30, 2025
- Iowa DOT Federal Recreational Trails Grant  
October 1, 2025

## Safe Roads Don't Happen by Chance

### We need your input!

Tell us where you feel unsafe traveling (walking/ biking/driving) in your community and what changes you would like to see (more sidewalks, safer road crossings, others).

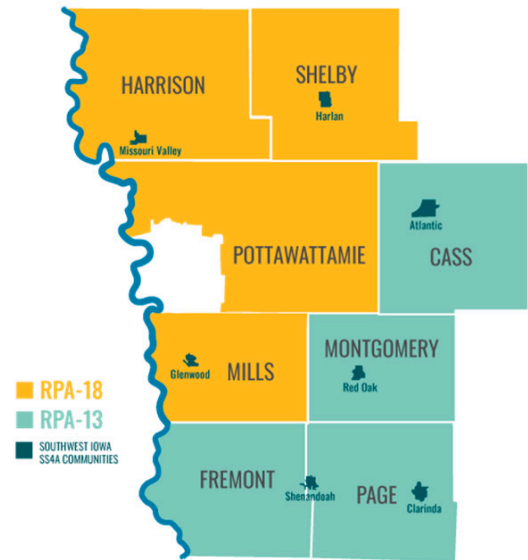
Take our short survey today

Scan the QR code or visit

<https://rpa-safeststreets.mapacog.org/>



SAFE STREETS  
**FOR ALL**  
--- RPA-13&18 ---



## SWIPCO STAFF

**John McCurdy, AICP**  
Executive Director

**Mark Lander**  
Transit Director

**Daurine Petersen**  
Administrative Services Director

**Rhonda Brown**  
Finance Manager

**Brandie McFarland**  
Human Resources Specialist

**Kersten Abild**  
Transit Scheduler II

**Ann Anstey**  
Housing Programs Coordinator

**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

**Ashley Hayes**  
Disaster Recovery Coordinator

**Julie Hays**  
Transit Scheduler I

**Dee Holtz**  
Administrative Assistant

**Holly Jackson**  
Planner I

**Matthew Lee**  
Building Inspector II

**Chris Parks**  
Communications Coordinator

**Nicole Rhodes**  
Grants Specialist II

**Phil Richter**  
Building Inspector I

**Kyle Rock**  
Maintenance Assistant

**Allie Strauss**  
Building Permit Technician I

**Kristen Templeton**  
Transit Coordinator

**Teresa Wright**  
Finance Specialist