

The Update

October 2025

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



Important Home Updates Made Possible Through SWIPCO Repair Programs

HARLAN – Southwest Iowa Planning Council (SWIPCO) has aided many Southwest Iowa residents with home repair needs to keep residences safe and efficient. A recent project in Harlan made some great updates for an older couple.

Richard and Sue Olson knew their home had some repair needs and contacted SWIPCO to get on the waiting list for possible assistance. After waiting for their name to get to the top of the list, the Olson's went to work on their application and SWIPCO Building Inspector Matthew Lee came to assess their needs. Sue Olson said they had some ideas of things that needed work and Lee then pinpointed what was needed and could be accomplished.

South O Roofing was then selected as the contractor and the Olson's got some needed updates to their home that will help them comfortably stay put as long as they wish.



Dick and Sue Olson had some important updates done to their home in Harlan through the SWIHTF, including window replacement, siding, and garage doors.

Sue Olson said, "Everything went by very smooth after meeting with Matthew. We are completely

satisfied with the process and the work."

Dick Olson added, "Everything that was done we needed, and they did such a wonderful job."

The work on the Olson's property included new vinyl siding, garage door replacement, basement window replacement, and some upstairs window replacement. Sue said the contractor was great to work with, "From day one, Continued..

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Home Repair Continued...

they were great. Let us know when product was in and when people were coming to work. They even made a fix on a siding section that we see a lot out on our patio that we didn't love due to some splicing. They made sure everything was done properly and inspected all the work."

They said one of the major things they needed was the replacement of the basement windows and that was a bit of a more difficult task with the concrete involved. The updates will help prevent moisture issues and make the home more energy efficient. Sue said the paperwork process was a bit of a challenge in the beginning but ultimately everything worked out great.

This project is a wonderful example of what SWIPCO can accomplish through funds from the Southwest Iowa Housing Trust Fund. These projects are focused on helping people improve their homes and make it a place they can thrive into the future.

If you have a need for your home and would like information about what assistance could be provided, please contact SWIPCO at 712-243-4196 or 1-866-279-4720.



Before and after pictures of the Olson's home in Harlan. Siding, windows, and garage doors were replaced to improve efficiencies in the home.

SWIPCO Planning Department Helps Create Vibrant and Resilient Communities

ATLANTIC- October is National Community Planning Month and SWIPCO would like to celebrate our Planning team which works to improve the well-being of all people living in our communities. Planning can range from creating comprehensive and hazard mitigation plans, to water and sewer grant projects, to community facility projects and more.



Lead Planner Dani Briggs started as an intern in 2017, right out of graduating with a bachelor degree in community and regional planning from Iowa State. She then spent some time with MIDAS in Fort Dodge before a full-time position opened up at SWIPCO in 2018. She said community planning just kind of came to her, "I had an interest in design and after hearing a professor speak about city planning I thought it was a neat way to mix design with practical purpose. I enjoyed playing games like Sim City and it was like bringing that concept to real life."

Briggs said she enjoys the problem solving aspect of the job, "I think above all, I like the fact that I get to help the rural towns in our region solve their problems whether those are big or small and whether the general public even realize it's a problem. I like that I can work on a variety of plans but that can also be a challenge because you constantly have to switch gears."

Others that play a role in the SWIPCO Planning Department are Executive Director John McCurdy, Grants Specialist III Tammy DeBord, Community Development Specialist II Ashley Hayes, Grants Specialist I Barb Boggs, Grants Specialist I Mary Auten, and Special Projects Assistant Chuck Morris.

Planning can help cities and counties with a wide range of behind the scenes or document oriented tasks but there are also many tangible things that exist throughout the region resulting from that work. Briggs said one of the projects she is most proud of is the grant funding achieved for the new Southwest Iowa Families, Inc. facility in Clarinda. She worked on securing a \$600,000 Community Development Block Grant for the \$2.9 million dollar mental health and support services facility for the region.

For many planning efforts it can be a challenge getting all involved parties on the same page and getting information in order. Constantly changing regulations and guidelines can also make long range planning difficult but helping communities prepare for and reach goals is worth the effort.

SWIPCO Past Board President Valline Recognized

ATLANTIC- SWIPCO staff and policy council members had the chance to recognize Past Board President Todd Valline at the SWIPCO Policy Council meeting on October 23, 2025. Valline spent four years as the chair starting in March of 2021 and guided the organization through the challenges of the end of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Executive Director John McCurdy thanked Valline for always being a resource to rely on for guidance and for pulling extra duty to stay on as chair through the pandemic and beyond. Valline is still an at-large member of the SWIPCO Policy Council, giving over his Chair role to Steve Green earlier this year.

Valline is the Director at the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He is a strong advocate for growth in Southwest Iowa and has always been a great ambassador for SWIPCO and SWITA. Thank you Todd for your dedication!



SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy presents SWIPCO Past Board President Todd Valline with his honorary gavel plaque.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

**Allyson Jones**Transit Scheduler I
Birthday Month**Daurine Petersen**Administrative Services Director
Birthday Month**Mary Auten**Grants Specialist I
3 Years of Service

SWITA by the Numbers

September 2025		YTD (Since July 1)	
Total Miles	186,784	516,493	
Total Hours	10,208	28,109	
Total Rides	46,365	126,333	
<u>September Rides by Service</u>		<u>September Rides by Demographic</u>	
Workforce Rides	7,374	Disabled	23,568
Taxi Rides	4,798	Elderly	2,249
Student Rides	7,913	Other Gen. Public	20,548
Other	26,280		

Upcoming Grant Information:

- IDALS Urban Conservation Projects
November 21, 2025
- IDNR Food Storage Capacity Grant
Until funds exhausted
- Iowa DOT Speed Feedback Signs Program
Opens January 1, 2026
- IEDA Certified Local Government Program
Opens January 1, 2026
- IDOT RISE Grant
February 1, 2026
- CDBG Water and Sewer Program
Early 2026

From the Desk of the Executive Director...

John McCurdy

Happy National Community Planning Month! SWIPCO was founded in 1975 partly in response to a realization that investment in infrastructure projects (such as through CDBG grants) should take local planning into account, and we've been doing that for 50 years. In my tenure at SWIPCO (19 years) I have often said that in our area, planning is doing. By that I mean that we don't have the luxury that some bigger organizations have where planners can have their heads in the clouds and plan for planning's sake. No, here our goal is to make planning practical and to implement it. That's part of the beauty of being a council of governments, unlike a consulting firm we are "stuck" here in these 8 counties, so yes we plan, but we also need to deliver on those plans through action, such as securing grant funding or other efforts to make planning goals a reality.

As part of our ongoing efforts to help our communities implement our goals, keep a look out in the coming days for a job announcement for a new community development position here at SWIPCO. We are looking to hire an experienced city administrator or city clerk to provide direct assistance to our cities and counties on things like budgeting, ordinances, planning and zoning, and all of those things that happen every day but can sometimes be overwhelming to our communities with limited staff. More details to come!

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

Allyson Jones
Transit Scheduler I

Matthew Lee
Building Inspector II

Chris Parks
Communications Coordinator

Nicole Rhodes
Grants Specialist II

Phil Richter
Building Inspector I

Kyle Rock
Maintenance Assistant

Kristen Templeton
Transit Coordinator

Teresa Wright
Finance Specialist