

VOLUME 36 ISSUE 5

NIACOG NEWS

Oct—Nov 2022

Steve Wendt joined the NIACOG staff 23 years ago and has served North Iowa well. He is known statewide for his work with the Community Development Block Grant Housing Rehabilitation program. Through that program, he has administered the grant funding for an estimated 400 housing rehabilitation projects. Steve assisted the State with adaptation of the program's rules to meet current needs/conditions on multiple occasions. Steve also created and administered NIACOG's Homebuyer Assistance loan program and other related housing projects. Steve is known for his extreme dedication to his profession, which was evidenced by his willingness to consistently put in extra hours. Prior to employment by NIACOG, Steve worked as a Real Estate appraiser and was able to apply his experience to his Community Development Planner position at NIACOG. Steve will be sorely missed not only for his vast knowledge about housing, mortgages, and federal grants, but also for his constant willingness to be of help to anyone who requested it. Thank you, Steve, for all your years of hard work and dedication to make North Iowa a better place for North Iowans!!

CALENDAR

Oct

- 12–1:00 PM Has Mat Meeting
- 12–2:30 PM Transportation Meeting
- 19–12:00 PM NIACOG Board Meeting

Nov

- 11– Office Closed for Veteran's Day
- 14– 5:15 PM NIACOG Board Meeting at Bennigan's
- 18 - 9:30 AM City Clerk Meeting
- 24 - Office Closed for Thanksgiving
- 25 - Office Closed for Thanksgiving

Job Openings at NIACOG

We would love for you to join our team!

REGIONAL PLANNER

Provides technical assistance in comprehensive planning, zoning, hazard mitigation, GIS, grant writing, and administration for a variety of local, state, and federal community development programs for member cities, counties and their affiliated organization. Required skills: GIS, writing skills, zoning, Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Excel. The position requires a bachelor's degree or equivalent education/experience. Community and regional planning degree preferred. Starting salary of \$40,000 - \$50,000 (commensurate with education/experience) and full benefits package including IPERS, health insurance, dental, etc.

TRANSIT OPERATIONS MANAGER

Would you like to manage operations for the most successful public transit program in Iowa? The Region 2 Transit system provides roughly 300,000 riders per year, and is based in Mason City, Iowa. We are looking for a highly motivated individual to coordinate day-to-day transit operations, manage a staff of 29 bus drivers and dispatchers, and prepare reports. Our hiring preferences include a 4-year college degree and 3-5 years of relevant experience. A Class C CDL driver's license with a passenger endorsement is required, but we can assist the applicant with obtaining the appropriate license and endorsement, if needed. Federal transit regulations require a post-offer, pre-employment physical and drug testing. The compensation package includes a starting salary of \$50,000 to \$65,000, health insurance, IPERS retirement, etc. Region 2 Transit is part of the North Iowa Area Council of Governments (NIACOG).

FULL-TIME TRANSIT DRIVER

Full-time transit bus driver – Driver will be responsible for the operation of various vehicles for the safe and orderly transportation of passengers to and from their destinations. Class C CDL with passenger endorsement is required. We can assist applicant in obtaining the appropriate license and endorsements. Applicant must have a good driving record for the past two years. \$17.00/hr, 40 hrs. per week. This full time position offers an excellent benefits package and includes IPERS retirement. A complete job description and job application can be found at www.R2bus.org.

PART-TIME TRANSIT DRIVER

Part-time transit bus driver – Driver will be responsible for the operation of various vehicles for the safe and orderly transportation of passengers to and from their destinations. Will assist applicant in obtaining the appropriate license and endorsements. Applicant must have a good driving record for the past two years. \$16.25/hr, 15 to 25 hrs. per week. A complete job description and job application can be found at www.R2bus.org.

NIACOG STAFF

ADMINISTRATION

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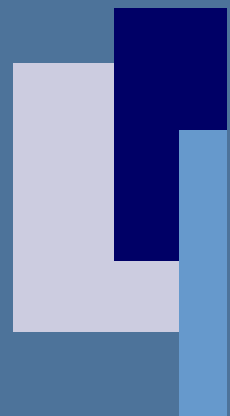
Amber Andersen—ext. 228
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TRANSIT

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Operations Manager
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Housing Trust Fund is now accepting applications for 2023. Eligible repairs include:

Roofing

Siding

Windows/Doors

Electrical/ Plumbing

Furnace

Hot Water Heater

Ceiling/ Wall Repair

Water/ Sewer Line

Wet Basement

Accessibility

(Ramps/Bathrooms/Main Floor Laundry)

Applications can be obtained at:

[Www.niacog.org/trustfund](http://www.niacog.org/trustfund)



For more information,
Contact Heidi Nielsen
at

hnielsen@niacog.org

or at

641-423-0491 x216



PUMPKIN PANCAKES

1 1/2 Cup Milk
1 Cup Pumpkin Puree
1 Large Egg
2 Tablespoons Vegetable Oil
2 Tablespoons Vinegar
2 Cups All-Purpose Flour
3 Tablespoons Brown Sugar
2 Teaspoons Baking Powder
1 Teaspoon Baking Soda
1 Teaspoon Ground Allspice
1 Teaspoon Ground Cinnamon
1 Teaspoon Ground Ginger
1/2 Teaspoon Salt
Cooking Spray

Stir together milk, pumpkin, egg, oil, and vinegar in a large bowl until well combined.

Whisk together flour, brown sugar, baking powder, baking soda, allspice, cinnamon, ginger, and salt in a separate bowl. Add to pumpkin mixture; whisk just until combined.

Spray a griddle or frying pan with cooking spray; heat over medium-high heat.

Pour 3 to 4 tablespoons batter for each pancake onto the hot griddle and flatten batter slightly with a spoon. Cook until small bubbles appear, about 2 minutes. Flip and cook until golden brown, about 2 more minutes. Repeat with remaining batter.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FUNDING

Congratulations to the NIACOG Region cities of Burt, Riceville, Leland, Rockford and Whittemore on the CDBG Water and Sewer (W/S) funding awards announced back in June and just recently, the City of Crystal Lake.

The City of Burt was awarded \$300,000 for a Water Treatment Plant improvement project. Total Project cost is estimated at \$711,100.

The City of Riceville was awarded \$300,000 for a Wastewater Treatment Facility Construction project. Total project cost is estimated at \$1,811,000.

The City of Leland was awarded \$289,000 for a Wastewater Treatment Facility Construction project. Total project cost is estimated at \$1,907,270.

The City of Rockford was awarded \$300,000 for a Water Tower Extension/Rehabilitation and Well Improvement project. Total Project cost is estimated at \$774,000.

The City of Whittemore was awarded \$300,000 for a Wastewater Collection System Improvement project. Total project cost is estimated at \$668,860.

The City of Crystal Lake was awarded \$250,000 for a Wastewater Collection System Improvement project. Total project cost is estimated at \$683,800.

The CDBG application process is very competitive, but NIACOG staff is very ready and willing to help your community better prepare and package your proposed project to improve your chances of receiving funding. The sooner you get NIACOG staff involved the sooner we can guide your city and your project to be in the best position for funding. There are many steps involved including procurement, preliminary engineering, design and having local financing in place.



Feel free to contact Chris Diggins at the NIACOG office if you would like to discuss a potential CDBG Water/Sewer Infrastructure or CDBG Community Facilities & Services project application.

641-423-0491 ex 215

cdiggins@niacog.org



Grant Opportunities

Creative Places Project Grant:

Funding available for the development of arts and culture projects to advance community engagement and promote tourism. Creative Places Projects Grants strives to support small projects that enhance Iowa communities.

\$500-\$2,500 with a 1:1 match requirement.

Application will be accepted on a quarterly basis throughout fiscal year 2023 (runs July 1, 2022—June 30, 2023)

Funding is a program provided by Iowa Legislature.

For more information, Please visit [Here](#)



Strengthening Communities Grant:

Funding supports organizations committed to strengthen communities through youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility with costs associated with renovations or facility infrastructure maintenance. Grants are for cities with less than populations of 28,000 per 2020 Census

\$10,000—\$100,000 with a 1:1/2 match

Applications close November 21, 2022

For more information, please visit [Here](#)



CONTRACTORS NEEDED FOR HOUSING PROJECTS!

Over the past twenty years, NIACOG has been the conduit for repairing roughly 400 CDBG housing projects in addition to 350 Housing Trust Fund homes.

The success of our housing rehabilitation programs in your communities is dependent upon being able to hire qualified and experienced contractors. We have been fortunate to work with many talented local contractors over the years; however, with the large growth in the number of houses that we are repairing each year, we are in considerable need of more construction contractors to continue to improve the housing stock in north Iowa communities.

Our program offers some pretty significant benefits to contractors including a large supply of work, reliable payment, and a predefined scope of work. We are asking for your help to spread the word.

For more information and participation offers please contact Heidi Nielsen at 641-423-0491 ex 216 or hnielsen@niacog.org

**IMPORTANT
NOTICE**

Funding Opportunity



- **Rural Innovation Grant Program** – Provides up to \$50,000 per grant for supporting creative, non-traditional ideas that focus on current issues and challenges faced by rural communities associated with the themes of community investment, growth and connection; the
- **Rural Scale-Up Grant Program** – Provides up to \$20,000 per grant to support the replication and spread of creative solutions that are addressing current issues and challenges faced by rural communities; the
- **Rural Enrichment Program** – Provides up to \$20,000 per grant to support small quality of life projects that will create meaningful results in rural communities. Developing quality spaces for people to want to live, work, play, and engage will support the vibrancy of Iowa's rural places. Eligible projects must be open to the public and contribute to the vitality and engagement of the community; the
- **Rural Housing Assessment Grant Program** – Provides \$10,000 per grant to support the use of publicly available online information through the "Profile of Iowa" tool and rural community efforts to interpret this hard data with supplemental information, as well as to implement through changes to development codes, local ordinances and housing incentives specific to their community needs in partnership with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach; the
- **Rural Child Care Market Study Grant Program** – Provides \$10,000 to support the use of data and analysis by rural communities to determine the specific needs and solutions for their area. Funding from the program will empower communities to assess their current child care market environment and develop strategies; and the
- **Rural Leadership Bootcamp Grant** – Provides training, mentorship, and \$1,000 in funding to rural communities and regions initiating leadership programs. This program targets rural communities who want to start a local leadership program and work to engage participants in community leadership roles. Grantees are required to participate in a two-day bootcamp – October 20 & 21 in Carroll – resulting in a work plan and a one-year mentorship.



NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNING DISTRICT COMMITTEE

Thank you Steve O'Neil and Roy Schwickerath for your dedication to the NCREPDC committee over the years. We have appreciated all of the work and ideas you have contributed, as well as, the friendship we have built. We wish you the best of luck on your retirements!

Congratulations– THE NCREPDC

IOWA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION APPROVES PUBLIC TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM FUNDING

AMES, Iowa – July 12, 2022 (copied from IDOT Notice) – At its meeting in Ames today, the Iowa Transportation Commission approved \$1.5 million in funding to support four public transit projects. The projects are funded under the state Public Transit Infrastructure Grant Program for new or improved facilities to support public transit services.

Made available each year by the Iowa General Assembly, a transit system can apply to have up to 80-percent of their project funded through this program. To qualify, a transit system must secure local funding for a minimum of 20-percent of the project costs.

These four projects were approved by the Commission:

- New automated bus wash (Siouxland Regional Transit System - Sioux City) \$238,434
- Rehabilitate shop area in the maintenance facility (CyRide-Ames) \$581,566
- **Replacement of insulation and vapor barrier for transit facility storage and maintenance area (North Iowa Area Council of Governments - Mason City) \$200,000**
- Renovation of existing facility – Phase I (Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission – Mount Pleasant) \$480,000

“The Public Transit Infrastructure Grant is an impactful source of funding for public transit systems. This program enables transit systems to construct and maintain facilities that are critical to the operation of their system and maintenance of the vehicles. This year, we received seven project applications requesting \$5,653,600.” said Rebecca Law, Transit Programs Administrator, Public Transit Section, Modal Transportation Bureau for the Iowa Department of Transportation.

Public transit service is available in all 99 counties. It provided over 10 million rides last year, getting the public where they need to go. Visit www.iowadot.gov/transit for more information on Iowa’s public transit systems.





AND....It looks like Majority Wins this debate!

Iowa State 10 V. Iowa 7

Farewell to Matt

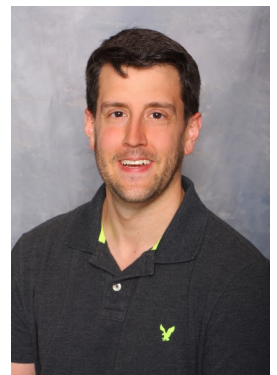
WE WILL
MISS YOU



This guy's last day at NIACOG will be on October 7th. After 9 years at NIACOG, Matt is moving back to his hometown to work with the City of Dubuque Planning Services Department. While in Dubuque, he plans to snowboard regularly and spend more time with family, including his 1 year old nephew.

Matt had a fun and valuable experience working with the NIACOG staff and communities around North Iowa. He plans to visit Mason City and North Iowa often!

Any questions you may have previously had for Matt can be addressed to Amber Andersen at andersen@niacog.org or 641-423-0491 ext. 228



TRANSPORTATION HAPPENINGS

The RPA 2 Technical Committee recently accepted applications for STBG/SWAP funded transportation projects in Federal Fiscal Years 2023-2026. Below is a table showing the funded projects.

STBG/SWAP Project Funding and Applications

SPONSOR	PROJECT	FUNDING	YEAR
Mason City	Winnebago, 4th, 12th NE	\$200,000	2023
	12th St. Bridge #8405	\$230,000	2023
	Pennsylvania Ave	\$600,000	2024
Cerro Gordo County	S 56	\$2,400,000	2026
Winnebago County	A 42	\$1,000,000	2025
Hancock County	B36	\$1,300,000	2026
Franklin County	S56	\$1,300,000	2026
TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED		7,030,000	

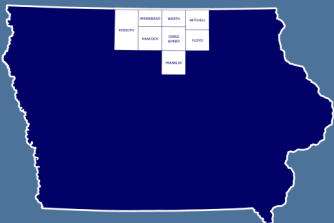
IOWA TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM (ITAP) Funding

The RPA 2 TAP Committee received three (3) applications requesting funds this year. Two (2) of the applications were recommended for funding as follows:

Cerro Gordo County Conservation applied for and was recommended for \$235,000 to complete an extension of the Prairie Land Trail that begins at the City of Thornton and extends southwest for approximately one (1) mile. The Prairie Land Trail will eventually stretch from Mason City southwest to Belmond in Wright County.

The City of Charles City applied for and was recommended for \$228,000 to for the extension of the Charley Western Trail on the north end of town. The Charley Western Trail is a multiuse pedestrian/bicycle trail that when totally completed will loop in or around the entire community connecting various points of interest along the route. This extension is being proposed as the City is already undertaking efforts to relocate the old Railroad Depot as a trail-head. This segment will connect that trailhead to the rest of the Charley Western Trail.

Franklin County applied for \$309,000 to fund an extension of the existing Rolling Prairie Trail from the east side of Hampton to the City of Hansell and include hard surfacing of the trail. This project was not recommended for funding at this time, but was encouraged to apply in next year’s cycle.



North Iowa Area Council of Governments

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