

# The Windmill

**Southern Iowa Council of Governments**

**April 2018**

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## SICOG's 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Southern Iowa Council of Governments and the Southern Iowa Development Group was held on Wednesday, March 28, 2018.

Karen Zabel, Chairperson, summarized the accomplishments from the agency's 2017 Annual Report. The organization completed a very successful year with over \$2,800,000 in grants coming into the area to benefit the members of SICOG. While SICOG was very successful in accessing money to complete very needed projects, SICOG also assisted with over 165 planning and technical assistance projects, said Ms. Zabel. The "SICOG 2017 Annual Report" is now available on the SICOG webpage [www.sicog.com](http://www.sicog.com) under the "Featured Publications" tab.

Karl McCarty representing Adams County on the Southern Iowa Council of Governments Executive Board of Directors was elected chairperson for the coming year, during the meeting held at the SICOG office. Others elected include Dan Christensen, representing Decatur County, was elected vice chairperson; Karen Zabel, representing Taylor County, was elected secretary; and Ron Riley, representing Union County, will serve as the organization's treasurer.

As SICOG chairperson, McCarty will assist the organization to promote the concept of regional approaches to problem solving, strengthen the association's ability to help its members, promote the association and define programs. SICOG is a membership organization for cities and counties within Adair, Adams, Clarke, Decatur, Madison, Ringgold, Taylor and Union counties.

SICOG serves as the source of information for and about various program processes and grants that can help to develop the economic conditions of the region. SICOG and its members help local communities and counties solve problems on an area-wide basis, whether these problems involve economic development, hazard mitigation planning, transportation planning, downtown development, revolving loan funds, housing development, or water and sewer projects.



## SICOG Staff

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# A View From The First Tee



SICOG held its annual meeting on March 28, 2018. It was 45 years ago on September 12, 1973 that the Southern Iowa Planning Agency incorporated. A name change took place two years later, at which time we became the SOUTHERN IOWA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS. It has been a rewarding history with over \$161,000,000 being brought into the area through the grantsmanship and technical assistance this agency has provided to our members.

I would like to thank the members of the SICOG Project Board and the Executive Board for all of their hard work, dedication, and commitment to this area over the past year. At the annual meeting, election of officers for the upcoming year took place. Newly elected officers are:

Karl McCarty, representing Adams County on the Southern Iowa Council of Governments Executive Board of Directors, was elected chairperson for the coming year. Others elected include Dan Christensen, representing Decatur County, vice chairperson; Karen Zabel, representing Taylor County, secretary; and Ron Riley, representing Union County, will serve as the organization's treasurer.

I was just thinking that I should write something about the legislature and how it is about to conclude its work for this year but they have not yet finished. We see new legislation regarding TIF (tax increment financing) has passed out of subcommittee and may change how cities use this economic development tool. HSB 681 seeks to alter (and limit) the current levies available to local governments for economic development projects. (See the article on page 5 of this newsletter.)

Good news, I have placed my golf clubs in the back of my car and am ready to use them whenever it stops raining and gets warmer.



As many of you are aware, we continue our "Partnership Program". This is a program to expand our services and work efforts to our member area. Elsewhere in this newsletter is a page identifying our current partners. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the individual organizations and financial institutions that have joined the "Partnership Program 2018".

As always, if there is anything we can do for you, please do not hesitate to call us at 641.782.8491. REMEMBER, we are working for you.

Timothy Ostroski





## Outstanding Service Recognition

On behalf of the SICOG Executive Board, former Vice-Chairperson, Karl McCarty, presented Karen Zabel with a plaque of appreciation (left). Karen was recognized for her guidance and leadership during the past year as she served as Chairperson of the Board. She expressed her appreciation to the entire Executive Board for their assistance throughout the year. Karen will continue to represent Taylor County and serve as Secretary on the SICOG Executive Board. Thank you for your dedication and service!



## Calendar of Events

**April 12 & 13**  
**NAHRO (National Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials Conference)**  
**West Des Moines Marriott**

**April 24**  
**Into to Planning & Zoning Workshop**  
**Supertel Inn & Conference Center, Creston, 5:30 p.m.**

**May 1**  
**SICOG Executive Board Meeting, 1:00 p.m.**  
**SIDG Executive Board Meeting to follow**

**May 8**  
**RPA 14/ATURA Policy Board Meeting**  
**Taylor County, 1:30 p.m.**



## 2018 SICOG Priorities

Southern Iowa Council of Governments has completed the process of updating the eight-county regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that serves as the economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen the regional economy. It sets forth the goals and objectives necessary to address economic problems and to capitalize on the resources of the region. The CEDS is also used to monitor and evaluate our long-term economic goals and strategies and to coordinate the development activities in the region.

A primary objective of the process is to include input from as much of the population as possible, so Southern Iowa Council of Governments gathered informed opinions on a variety of factors regarding the economic condition of the region. Surveys covered a broad range of issues important to our region. The results provided valuable insight into the problems, priorities and accomplishments of the region. Our CEDS committee, composed of government, private sector, and stakeholder organization representatives agreed upon the following priorities for the SICOG region for 2018:

- |                                |                             |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Economic Development        | 10. Sewer                   |
| 2. Housing                     | 11. Youth                   |
| 3. Transportation              | 12. Solid Waste             |
| 4. Local Planning & Management | 13. Rural Health            |
| 5. Community Services          | 14. Energy                  |
| 6. Water Resources             | 15. Value Added Agriculture |
| 7. Comprehensive Planning      | 16. Social Services         |
| 8. Recreation                  | 17. Other                   |
| 9. Elderly Services            |                             |

**The Final 2018 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)** is now available on the SICOG webpage [www.sicog.com](http://www.sicog.com) under the "Featured Publications" tab.



## Changes to the Single Family Housing Repair Loan & Grant Program

The USDA recently announced some exciting changes to their USDA Rural Development's home repair loan and grant program, commonly referred to as the Section 504 Program. USDA Development's home repair program helps eligible households make essential improvements such as repairing or replacing storm doors, windows, steps, furnaces, water heater or roofs. Funds can also be used for insulation, electrical, plumbing, septic and water systems, and to provide accessibility improvements for persons with disabilities.

The USDA has changed the Section 504 Single Family Housing Repair Loan and Grant Program to determine affordability based on income and a repayment ratio instead of a monthly household budget. They have also streamlined the process to make the program faster and more efficient.

### Streamlined Changes:

- Applicants living in extreme poverty could be eligible for 100% grant assistance up to the allowable \$7,500 maximum lifetime limit for eligible project costs.
- Affordable loans at a fixed 1% interest rate. A minimum of \$1,000 loan, only \$4.60 per month or 15 cents per day.
- Qualified homeowners may receive a maximum loan of \$20,000 at a fixed 1% interest rate. Loans and grants may be combined for up to \$27,500 in total assistance.
- Very-low-income homeowners with a repayment ratio between 30% to 46% may be eligible for a 50% loan and 50% grant.
- Grant recipients must be age 62 or older.

For more information, visit the USDA website: [www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-repair-loans-grants](http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-repair-loans-grants) You may also call your local USDA office for assistance. Contact numbers for the 8 counties within the SICOG region are as follows:

- Adams and Taylor – contact the Atlantic Office: 641.243.2107.
- Adams, Clarke, Decatur, Madison, Ringgold, and Union – contact the Indianola Office: 515.961.5365.

## 2018 SICOG PARTNERSHIPS

### PLATINUM (\$2,500)

- John Wayne Birthplace Society, Ltd. of Winterset
- City of Osceola
- Clarke County Development Corporation

### DIAMOND (\$1,500)

- Creston City Water Works
- First National Bank of Afton & Creston
- Iowa State Savings Bank of Corning, Creston, Diagonal, & Lenox
- Lenox Municipal Utilities

### GOLD (\$1,000)

- Garden & Associates, Ltd. of Creston

### SILVER (\$500)

- American State Bank of Lamoni, Osceola & Winterset
- Clarke County State Bank of Murray & Osceola
- Corning Municipal Utilities
- Greater Regional Medical Center of Creston
- JEO Consulting Group, Inc. of Ankeny
- Michael Foods of Lenox
- PCSB Bank in Clarinda, Corning, Creston, Lenox, & Mount Ayr
- Snyder & Associates, Inc. of Ankeny & Atlantic
- Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative of Corning, Mount Ayr, & Stanton
- Tyler Insurance Services of Creston & Mount Ayr
- Union County Development Association
- Veenstra & Kimm, Inc. of West Des Moines

### BRONZE (\$250)

- Adams Community Economic Development Corporation
- Akin Building Centers of Corning & Creston
- Bradley Angus Farms of Lenox
- City State Bank of Mount Ayr
- Clarke Electrical Cooperative of Osceola
- Farmers & Merchants State Bank of Orient, St. Charles, & Winterset
- FNB Bank of Fontanelle & Greenfield
- Gilbert True Value of Leon & Osceola
- Lenox Development Corporation
- Ringgold County Development Corporation
- Saylor Realty, LLC of Osceola
- Southwestern Community College
- State Bank of Brooks
- Union State Bank of Greenfield
- Union State Bank of Winterset

**Thank You for Your  
Continued Support!**

## News of Interest from the Iowa Legislature

### Tax Increment Finance

HSB681, a bill that would negatively impact Tax Increment Finance (TIF) statewide, passed out of a House subcommittee on Thursday morning. If enacted, the bill would remove the foundation property taxes of a school district imposed under *Code of Iowa* Section 257.3 and the county basic levy property taxes imposed under Section 331.423 from the division of taxes in an urban renewal area. The bill removes the two levies from an urban renewal area, but does allow for a school district or county to voluntarily transfer all or a portion of those levies to the municipality creating the urban renewal area. If a school district voluntarily transfers a portion of those levies, they would not be eligible for the related portion under the school foundation aid formula, making them less likely to do so. The school foundation levy portion of the bill is related to the reimbursement from the state to school districts for the lost revenue. However, the increase in sales taxes generated by these TIF districts far exceeds the amount that the state reimburses. **Please contact your legislators, and let them know how this will impact future economic development projects in your city.**

Reprint from the **Iowa League of Cities' Legislative Link.**

### Draft Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP)

*SICOG serves as transportation planning staff to the five-county RPA 14/ATURA Transportation Planning Affiliation region (Adair, Taylor, Union, Ringgold and Adams Counties).*

The FY2019 Draft Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP) outlines the proposed RPA 14/ATURA budget and the work SICOG will accomplish as the administrator of the regional transportation planning affiliation during FY2019.

This document is available for review and comment on the ATURA website: [www.sicog.com/affiliates/atura](http://www.sicog.com/affiliates/atura) under the heading "Documents Available for Public Review and Comment" located near the bottom of the page. Please contact Becky Nardy at your SICOG office (641) 782-8491 or [nardy@sicog.com](mailto:nardy@sicog.com) for hard copies of the Draft TPWP, should you desire additional information, or wish to make comments.



## Spring Grant Opportunities

The following are deadlines for popular grants our members and associated organizations may wish to consider. SICOG has the staff and experience to assist our communities in submitting the best possible applications for these funds. **There are many other sources, so if you have a project, contact us.**

Source/Program	Funding Uses	Eligible Applicants	Due Date
FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (\$1,400,000 Iowa allocation)	Hazard mitigation plans and projects, including tornado safe rooms, building and utility retrofits, minor flood control projects, elevations and relocations of buildings in flood hazard areas and storm water management projects.	Local governments, certain non-profit organizations	As long as funds remain
FEMA SAFER Grant	Funding for fire departments to hire firefighters and support volunteers and to implement retention and recruitment programs.	Fire departments	April 27
USDA Rural Energy for America Program	Grants for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects impacting private enterprises	Businesses, cooperatives, farmers, and similar entities	April 30
USDA Rural Business Development Grant	Targeted technical assistance, training and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses	Local governments, non-profits, higher education, rural cooperatives, related organizations	April 30
Ringgold County SCICF grants	Projects with permanent impact on Ringgold County residents, including community betterment, arts, beautification, and human needs projects	Local governments, non-profits in Ringgold County and/or serving Ringgold County	May 1
Iowa Cultural Heritage Project Grant	Grants up to \$10,000 to support a community project that creates jobs for Iowans and provides access to a cultural heritage experience	Local governments and non-profits	May 1
Iowa Cultural Affairs Capacity Building Grant	Up to \$2,500 to build organizational capacity of cultural organizations to operate and provide programs for the community	Nonprofit arts and culture organizations with budgets under \$150,000	May 1
Iowa Great Places New Designations	Applications for new designations and for projects in those newly designated communities. These grants can be substantial.	Local governments and non-profits	May 1
Iowa Arts Project Grant	Grants up to \$10,000 to support the creation and presentation of new artwork, development of an arts experience or formation of an arts education program.	Local governments and non-profits	May 1
CDBG Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program	Owner-Occupied rehabilitation for single-family homes being used as the principal residence.	Cities and counties	May 4
Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines Affordable Housing Program	Housing grants for homeownership, down payment assistance, rental housing, development projects, and rehabilitation/renovation	Local governments, non-profits, private housing developers	May 31
Wellmark Foundation MATCH Program	Promising projects that help individuals, families & communities achieve better health by creating safe & healthy environments that encourage physical activity & consumption of nutritious foods.	Local governments, non-profits	June 8
Solid Waste Alternatives Program	Programs to encourage landfill alternatives – recycling, diversion, new technologies, new manufacturing processes, etc.	Local governments, non-profits, for-profits	June 30
CDBG Water and Sewer Program	Water and wastewater capital improvements: plants, mains, lagoons, pumps, towers, etc.	Local governments (governments can apply on behalf of sub-recipients, such as rural water associations and utility districts)	June 30
Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT)	Tourism, recreation, and entertainment capital projects	Local governments, non-profits and some for profits	July 15
REAP Open Spaces Program	State funding for recreation, conservation, and outdoor resources projects	Cities and county conservation boards	August 15
Alliant Energy Foundation	Small typically non-capital projects, such as signage, exhibits, landscaping, computers, program support; focus areas are helping families, education, and environment.	Local governments, civic organizations, and nonprofits in Alliant's service area	September 1

As always, SICOG provides this un-exhaustive list of grants to generate ideas about possible projects and provide funding guidance. Please contact SICOG with your project ideas. Grant funding sources are increasingly interested in creative solutions to problems and many are willing to support not just construction but also operations. If your community has a project that outside funding might address, then please contact your SICOG office. **We would be glad to help and can attend a local meeting at no cost to discuss the project or idea.**

## From the Planner's Desk

This section of the Windmill is designed to provide cities and counties with ideas and policies to address potential issues or concerns from the viewpoint of planners. Some of the ideas or strategies will not be applicable to every entity, but the goal is to provide an alternative viewpoint for stakeholders and staff. Please feel free to contact the SICOG office about any of the planning strategies mentioned or to raise other planning topics.

### 13 Ways to Kill Your Community *continued...*

#### **Way #8: Live in the Past**

"Attitude is what communities live and die by, and few of those attitudes are more successful at killing a community than the one that has you always living in the past." People generally display this type of attitude in one of two ways. The first way is to hold on to the glory of the past. This is easy to do in our rural towns that once had much larger populations and vibrant downtowns. The problem here is that we can spend so much thought in reflection of the past that it leaves us feeling defeated about the future, short on hope, and slightly lost, with no focus on the future or transition to thinking of the future. People who live in the nostalgia or romance of the past are excellent at draining the energy of creative, forward thinkers. Such people can convey that there is no point in doing something new because it only takes us further away from what used to be right in our community.

Another way people thrive on the past is to cling to some so-called injustice that happened in their community and since then, everything has been an injustice and any organization that was involved in the so-called injustice can no longer be trusted. For these people, the community cannot move forward until some wrong is made right. Sometimes the injustice can be very minor and is not worth the effort to destroy the good work occurring today. Don't let one past event or one thorny issue derail plans and discussions about other current issues.

The past can be learned from and should be, but changing the past is not possible. We can select some of the positive ideas from the past and incorporate them, as applicable, into plans for the future. We must, however, embrace the trends that define the future, or be found falling behind and becoming irrelevant economically and socially as a community.

Mistakes happen and we cannot go back in time. Solutions for the future cannot be found if we cannot let go of the past. Albert Einstein once said, "Learn from yesterday, live for today, and hope for tomorrow."



### **Intro to Planning & Zoning Workshop in Creston**

The Introduction to Planning and Zoning for Local Officials workshop is a three-hour session designed to introduce the basic principles of land use planning and development management to elected officials, planning and zoning officials, and board of adjustment members without formal training in the subjects. Using case scenarios in a highly interactive format, the workshop highlights issues frequently faced in the land use process, such as the roles and responsibilities of the planning and zoning commission, the board of adjustment, and the elected council and board of supervisors. It also will highlight legal issues frequently faced by local officials, such as variances, special uses, nonconforming uses, spot zoning, hearing procedures, and conflicts of interest.

All workshops begin with registration and a light supper at 5:30 p.m. The program begins at 6:00 p.m. and concludes by 8:45 p.m. The registration fee is \$65 per individual. This fee is reduced to \$55 per individual if a city or county registers 5 or more officials to attend. The fee covers the workshop instruction, workshop materials, and supper. The workshop has been pre-approved by the Iowa Municipal Finance Officers Association and the Iowa League of Cities for credits toward certification. The location and date for the workshop in our area is below:

**April 24 – Creston - Supertel Inn and Conference Center, 800 Laurel Street**

To register for the event, copy and paste the link below to your browser:  
<https://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/planningBLUZ/workshops/>

# *The Windmill*

## *Southern Iowa Council of Governments*

### SICOG EXECUTIVE BOARD

Karl McCarty  
Dan Christensen  
Karen Zabel

Adams County  
Decatur County  
City of Lenox Representing  
Taylor County

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Madison County  
Ringgold County  
Private Sector Representative  
Private Sector Representative  
Private Sector Representative  
Private Sector Representative  
Member-At-Large

Treasurer



Southern Iowa Council of Governments (SICOG) is a non-profit organization that provides and coordinates community and economic development services primarily through the delivery of planning services, technical program assistance, grant writing and grant administration to assist local governments and others in their efforts to improve the social and economic well-being of its eight-county service area.

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