

The Windmill

Southern Iowa Council of Governments

July 2018

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Invest in Your Community!

In June, SICOG planners Jeremy Rounds, Joel Lamb and Marcus Amman attended the 2018 Small City Workshop at the Afton Community Center hosted by the Iowa League of Cities. The Small City Workshop is an annual series held at various smaller communities throughout the state and focused on important municipal government issues with the aim of providing guidance for small city officials. The topic of this year's Small City Workshop was 'Strategically Investing in Your Community' featuring guidance on planning for community development projects, prioritizing infrastructure needs and how to smartly budget for improvement projects.



Mickey Shields, Assistant Director of Membership Services for the Iowa League of Cities, addressed the challenges small city officials face when attempting to properly assess their city's current infrastructure and understand what needs to be repaired or replaced. Many of Iowa's small cities, which includes a large portion of the communities in SICOG's eight county region, are challenged

by aging infrastructure where necessary maintenance has been deferred or equipment has surpassed its useful lifespan. Too often, cities with limited financial resources and small staff are forced to debate crucial questions surrounding their infrastructure that should have been confronted years or even decades before. What is the condition of our streets? When do we need to upgrade our utility system? How can we afford these necessary projects?

In order to strategically invest in their community, it is critical that small city leaders plan for the future using fact-driven and goal-oriented documents including an annual budget, comprehensive plan, strategic plan, capital improvements plan, street maintenance plan, and possibly more. With any of these plans, citizen engagement, prioritization of goals and projects, and ongoing measurement of the effectiveness of completed projects are crucial to the success, reliability, and relevance of the guiding documents as it relates to the future of the community. As always, SICOG is ready and willing to assist our cities and their leaders with the daunting task of planning for stability and prosperity in the future. Please contact Jeremy Rounds, Joel Lamb or Marcus Amman at your SICOG office with any questions or concerns you may have.



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A View From The First Tee



Since this newsletter is after the 4th of July, I thought I would say a few words about the 4th of July. The first thing is, as with many things, I have been told that I should not say "Happy 4th of July" or "have a great July 4th". I am supposed to use Independence Day. You don't say "Happy February 14th" - you say "Happy Valentines Day". So to be correct, "Happy Independence Day." Although the official holiday has passed, we should remember to celebrate our freedom EVERY day!

I sometimes play golf and have had several holes-in-one, but this is not my year. However, people want to pay me to play with them. In the last 30 days, I have witnessed 2 individuals score an ace on a par 3. I am thinking that I must be good luck. All told, I have witnessed 10 holes-in-one. I guess they are not as rare as one would have you believe.

RAGBRAI is almost here, July 21-28. We have two additional bike enthusiasts. This year the full contingent of SICOOG staff will be heading to Onawa. Please watch for "TEAM SICOOG" updates via our web site, as we ride through communities and the countryside. Remember, we are all riding this year in hopes of becoming healthier, happier, and trimmer individuals. "TEAM SICOOG" members are looking forward to this year's RAGBRAI. This year, the daily rides are longer than last year, which will give us less time to discover the treasures in each of the host communities.

The Coffee Cup contest is not very hard this month so I am sure that many people will be calling in. Since we have just celebrated Independence Day, this month's challenge is a two-part question - History of the US - you must get both parts correct in order to receive the coveted SICOOG coffee mug. Name the President who had 1) the most Vice-Presidents and 2) which word is misspelt in the Declaration of Independence?

Last month, I included an article on CDBG's. If you are thinking of submitting a CDBG application this year, now is the time to get started.

As was mentioned last month, many projects are underway in the region. Water treatment plants and wastewater treatment plants are under construction. Speaking of water plants, we are all now drinking good potable water after the "10 day boil alert". We are working with many (that is more than 4) new economic development projects, meaning more jobs for the area.

Just a short note to bring you up to date on when SICOOG's web site will be back on line. I have had many calls saying that our web site is not accessible. We apologize for the inconvenience. We are in the process of converting from one program language to another and are experiencing some difficulties. By the time you are reading this newsletter all problems should be fixed.

As always, if there is anything I can do, please let me know. Our phone number is 641.782.8491. REMEMBER, we are working for you.

Timothy Ostroski



SICOG Executive Board Meeting of June 5, 2018

Vice-chairperson Dan Christensen called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 5, 2018 at the SICOG office in Creston. The following members were in attendance: Christensen, Davidson, McCann, Riley, Trickey, Tullberg, Twombly, Waddle and Zabel. Staff present: Ostroski and Brimm.

Twombly made a motion to approve the agenda. McCann seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.

Tullberg made a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting of May 1, 2018. Riley seconded the motion. All ayes. Motion carried.

Waddle made a motion to approve the financial reports for the month of May, as presented. Tullberg seconded the motion. All ayes, motion carried.

Other items discussed included: Legal Representation, Personnel Matters, Audit Report, Form 990, CEDS, Building Renovations, Grant Report, Partnership Program, Golf Invitational, SICOG Website, and Building Repairs.

Twombly made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:38 p.m. Waddle seconded the motion, all ayes. Motion carried.

Minutes Submitted by Brimm

SICOG Welcomes Marcus Amman!



Marcus Amman joins the SICOG staff as a Transportation/Regional Planner. Prior to joining the SICOG staff, he was working for the MPO in Ada and Canyon counties in Idaho. He received his bachelor's degree in Community and Regional Planning from Iowa State University after serving in the military from 2012-2015. Marcus brings his wife and two sons to the area with him. His family loves to travel whether it is a weekend trip a few hours away or big trips for a week. They enjoy nature and spending time outside camping, hiking, or just enjoying the sun. They have purchased a home in Creston and are excited about moving in. Marcus is excited to be taking over the transportation planning at SICOG in the coming months after shadowing Becky. In addition to transportation planning, Marcus has a passion for housing issues, regional planning, and safe streets that work for all types of users. Welcome to the SICOG team, Marcus!

Calendar of Events

July 10

RPA 14/ATURA Policy Board Meeting, Pizza Ranch, Creston, 1:30 p.m.

July 15 – July 30

Online registration for the Iowa Arts Summit on August 3, Ankeny

July 25 – APPROXIMATE date of CDBG award announcements

August 7

SICOG Executive Board Meeting, 1:00 p.m.

SIDG Executive Board Meeting to follow

SICOG Celebrates Judy Brimm's 25th Year Employee Anniversary!



Judy Brimm began her career with SICOG as Bookkeeper/Secretary twenty-five years ago, in July 1993. Judy now plays a vital role as Finance Director managing SICOG's \$4 million budget and keeping track of over 40 major projects, 12 revolving loan funds and coordination of three corporations.

Ron Riley, SICOG Board Member from Union County, said at the board's meeting on July 2, 2018, "We are so proud to have you as part of the SICOG work family. We hope that you keep up the good work for many years to come! We sincerely appreciate your hard work and efforts year after year. Thank you for your many wonderful years of service!"



Executive Director, Timothy Ostroski added, "Congratulations on your 25th anniversary! You have been such significant part of our team and I couldn't imagine our workplace without you. Through the years, your talents and efforts have helped us reach our goals. I want to express my personal appreciation for your achievement of this milestone. Loyal and dedicated employees like you are the foundation to any successful company. Thank you for your contribution to our success!"



*Thank you for your commitment
and enthusiasm, Judy!*

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 & Oskaloosa

SILVER (\$500)

- American State Bank of Lamoni, Osceola & Winterset
- Clarke County State Bank of Murray & Osceola
- Community Development Corporation of Greenfield
- 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 Support!

Public Hearing & Meeting Notice: RPA 14/ATURA Transportation Planning Affiliation

The Policy Board of the **RPA 14 / ATURA Transportation Planning Affiliation** (Adair, Taylor, Union, Ringgold, and Adams Counties) will meet at **1:30 p.m.** on **Tuesday, July 10, 2018** at The Pizza Ranch, 520 Livingston Street in Creston, Iowa.

Action items on the agenda include:

- **1:30 p.m. Public Hearing** regarding RPA 14/ ATURA Final FY2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- RPA 14 / ATURA Final FY2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- RPA 14/ATURA 2018 Title VI Program

The public is invited to attend and provide comments. Contact Becky Nardy at Southern Iowa Council of Governments at: nardy@sicog.com or 641-782-8491. For additional information: www.sicog.com/affiliates/atura

Take Action in YOUR City's Future

We all like to think that we are prepared for the future, whether that is as individuals or communities. The future can be pretty intimidating to most people as the high levels of uncertainty lead to fear. But as a city, you do not have to be unprepared for the future. That's where a comprehensive plan comes in. It is a complete analysis of the community, county, or region that typically includes its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, or SWOT. There are also lots of maps, charts, and graphics that are included to better point out demographic, background information, and target areas among other elements.

Comprehensive plans are designed to be a guide to direct city leaders and citizens as to the goals and aspirations that a city aims to achieve. Many times these plans focus not just on the city, but also the region and generally cover a long-term timeframe, oftentimes 10, 15, or 20 years into the future. Basically, it means that you want to promote the best parts of your city and develop a plan that highlights positives all while giving you the direction for the future.

SICOG is currently working on three Comprehensive plans for the cities of Creston, Lenox, and Leon. Comprehensive plans are used in communities to help drive investments and reach long-term goals to better these communities. During this process, we want to encourage anyone living in these communities to engage in the planning process with us. Our goal is to create a living document that is used on a regular basis to drive these cities to greatness. With that said, we need your help during the process by providing input at meetings and with any surveys you may see from us. We want to hear what you have to say, so we can plan comprehensively.

Upcoming 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
Iowa West Foundation	Community development, economic development, education, and human needs projects	Local governments and non-profit organizations in Adams and Taylor Counties	July 16, November 15
USDA Section 533 Housing Preservation Grants	Grant funding to help low-income homeowners and some rental housing owners make home repairs and rehabilitate their homes	Local governments, non-profits, and consortia of such organizations	August 9
Our Town grants	Federal grants through National Endowment for the Arts to support "creative placemaking" projects and events.	Local governments and non-profits	August 9
Iowa Certified Local Governments (CLG) grant	Historic preservation activities, including National Register nominations, educational projects, surveys, planning for preservation, etc.	Iowa cities, counties, and land-use districts that have signed a Certified Local Government Agreement with the State of Iowa and the National Park Service and that are in good standing.	August 13 (draft applications)
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
IDOT RISE Local Competition	Transportation infrastructure in support or to allow development of value-added employment opportunities, such as industrial parks, commercial areas, etc.	City and County governments	September 1
Iowa Sponsored Projects Program	Storm water, flood control, and water quality projects	Local government with a clean water SRF loan in progress	September 4
Solid Waste Alternatives Program	Programs to encourage landfill alternatives – recycling, diversion, new technologies, new manufacturing processes, etc.	Local governments, non-profits, for-profits	September 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)	September 30
Iowa Water Recreation Access Cost Share Program	Water access projects such as docks, boat ramps, etc.	Local governments	September 30
Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT)	Tourism, recreation, and entertainment capital projects	Local governments, non-profits and some for profits	October 15
Arts Build Communities Grant Program	A financial (\$10,000) and technical assistance program that brings artists and State universities into communities to help with creative problem solving	Local governments, non-profits and K-12 schools	November 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 #11: Ignore Outsiders

Last month, we talked about the failure of some communities because they do not accept new ideas. Often, the best sources of new ideas are outsiders who have experiences from where they have lived in the past that may be instructive for our community. Therefore, it is vital that a community not just accepts outsiders, but also makes it clear that they want their ideas and input, as well as help in carrying them out. In this way, we must purposely engage them in community affairs. This means to actively invite them into the civic clubs, community organizations, and other groups that have a positive impact in the community.

It is interesting that when people run for local office, they tout that they have been lifetime residents of the community in which they are seeking office. That appeals to most people, obviously, or campaigns wouldn't mention it. However, as a transplant myself from outside of the SICOG region, I can bring experiences, perspectives, and ideas that may be foreign to local people but highly successful if tried.

The authors define outsiders not just as new people to the community, but anyone who does not typically identify with the community's shared sense of who it is. Interestingly, the main reason these outsiders can cause success is simply because they chose to live in our community. While long-term residents may choose to continue to live in the community, newcomers made a deliberate decision to move from his/her former community to our community. They saw some strength in our community and made the choice to live in the area, and that is powerful. They could have gone anywhere, but chose to live in *our* community.

Another feature of outsiders is that they don't know all the dirty community history and come in with a clean slate. Yes, the outsider may bring in his/her family and buy up the best development land, speak a different language, or have the star athletes that take the spotlight and scholarships from our children. Sometimes they don't pay homage to the town's powerful families or dare to challenge the status quo.

The author also focuses on immigrants from outside of the country. These are powerful because many of them came from a place with very little sanitation, often no right to vote, and no opportunities to advance themselves economically. They often become great entrepreneurs because they are willing to take risks and do not just sit around waiting for the government to take care of them. The authors diagnose it well: "We have lost that entrepreneurial, adventurous spirit that our forefathers who came from other countries had, that spirit that built our communities without government grants and programs or consultants or feasibility studies and the like."



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Southern Iowa Council of Governments

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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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