

# The Update



June 2024

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

## SWITA Brings Home DOT and FTA Honors at IPTA Annual Awards



SWITA accepting the Iowa DOT Regional Transit System of the Year Award (L-R: Amy Colwell, Iowa DOT; Emma Simmons, Iowa DOT; Jamie Wingert, Iowa DOT; Laura Lutz-Zimmerman, Iowa DOT; Mark Lander, SWITA Transit Director; Tracy Clark, SWITA Transit Scheduler; Kristin Haar, Iowa DOT; Matthew Oetker, Iowa DOT)

Ames, Iowa – Southwest Iowa Transit Agency (SWITA) brought home two major honors from the 2024 Iowa Public Transit Association Annual Awards last week. SWITA was named the Iowa Department of Transportation’s Regional Transit System of the Year and received the FTA Region 7 Rural Transit Systems Award of Excellence. The awards were handed out on Thursday, June 6th at the Gateway Hotel and Conference Center in Ames.

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The Iowa DOT Award is based on several factors meant to represent ridership and efficiency. SWITA has earned this award again due to record ridership all while being the most cost-efficient system in the state.

The FTA Region 7 Rural Transit Systems Award of Excellence is derived from the best year-over-year ridership percentage and number increase from 2021-2022. SWITA also received this award in 2021 with 377,547 rides provided that fiscal year.

## DOT and FTA Awards Continued...

2022 ridership went up to 480,229 rides, resulting in the award presented this year. SWITA will hold this honor for the 2023 year as well with 526,300 rides provided.

SWITA Transit Director Mark Lander said, “SWITA continues to see growth with all of our services. This award is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the men and women at SWITA that work day in and day out to get the people of Southwest Iowa where they need to go. This takes everyone from the board, the office, the shop, and the drivers.”

SWITA transportation is accessible to everyone in the eight-county region, including the disabled and elderly. SWITA offers several transportation options including work routes, medical trips, student transportation, taxi service in six communities, and special/charter trips. SWITA vehicles are equipped with wheelchair accessibility and one personal attendant rides free.



SWITA accepting the FTA Region 7 Rural Transit Systems Award of Excellence. (L-R: FTA Deputy Regional Administrator Mark Bechtel, SWITA Transit Director Mark Lander, SWITA Transit Scheduler Tracy Clark, FTA Operations and Program Management Director William Kalt.

SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy said, “At SWITA we’re lucky to have the best staff and drivers anywhere who go the extra mile to get our clients where they need to go. Public transportation means freedom of movement for our riders and adds fuel to our local economy. Many take for granted being able to hop in a car and go somewhere but not everyone has that luxury. These awards recognize the fact that Southwest Iowa has one of the best public transit systems in the state, which makes all aspects of life more accessible to our residents, whether they have a car or not.”

You can find out more about SWITA by visiting our website [SWITA.com](http://SWITA.com) and you can follow us on Facebook for regular updates. For questions or to request a ride, contact SWITA at 712-243-2518 or 1-800-842-8065.

## SWIPCO and Glenwood Officials Tour 712 Lofts Project With Lt. Governor Adam Gregg



L-R: SWIPCO Communications Coordinator Chris Parks, Brock Sell, DeShawne Bird-Sell, Developer Ryan Sell, SWIPCO Disaster Recovery Coordinator Ashley Hayes, Lt. Governor Adam Gregg, Glenwood Mayor Angie Winquist, Glenwood City Administrator Amber Farnan, Mills County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jennie

**Glenwood, IA-** Representatives from Southwest Iowa Planning Council (SWIPCO), the City of Glenwood, and Developer Ryan Sell had a chance to show off the 712 Lofts development to Lieutenant Governor Adam Gregg on Tuesday, June 11th.

The Lt. Governor was making his way through the region and provided an opportunity to check out this project and discuss other projects in Glenwood. Sell and his family hosted a tour of their conversion project of the former Glen Haven Nursing Home into 3-bedroom and 1-bedroom apartments. The project has been partially funded through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Disaster Recovery Housing funds administered by SWIPCO following the 2019 Missouri River Floods.

Sell talked about the challenges of converting the building into the space they envisioned and hopes it brings a great option for the community. “We wanted to put something here that wasn’t really available anywhere else in town. This gives residents a unique space option with some three-bedroom, two-bath units,” Sell said.

There will be 27 units total available once the project is done including a small house on the site that is being renovated as well. Sell said it’s been a learning process and has been challenging and frustrating at times with changes made along the way but it’s all working out. “We were all learning... through the process but ultimately SWIPCO and Iowa Economic Development have been great partners. We wouldn’t have been able to do this without the help,” Sell said.

## 712 Lofts Tour Continued....

Lieutenant Governor Gregg said he loves seeing projects like this one happen, “Ultimately you hope that this has a chance to bring a new generation to town. This can attract families to your community.”

Glenwood City Administrator Amber Farnan also discussed the downtown façade work that is about to get underway because of a CDBG Downtown Revitalization grant that SWIPCO is working with the city on 8 buildings around the Glenwood town square will get a facelift starting this summer. That project has approximately \$960,000 in funding, \$490,000 in CDBG funds and \$470,000 in city and building owner funds.

Farnan also touched on a fiber project the city is in the midst of with Western Iowa Networks. They entered a partnership to bring fiber internet service to the entire city. The city is using American Rescue Plan Act funds to support the project.

Lt. Governor Gregg asked about what obstacles arise in these projects and several on hand expressed concern with some of the changing requirements of grant funds and some of the paperwork obligations being a big challenge to fill. Gregg expressed his sympathy to those issues and said sometimes it’s above the state’s control when it comes to federal funding, but he noted the hangups. Also discussed was the vital need for good infrastructure for communities to continue to grow and attract business, such as a proper water system.



712 Lofts Developer Ryan Sell talks about a unit with Lt. Governor Adam Gregg and SWIPCO Disaster Recovery Coordinator Ashley Hayes

Glenwood officials were very thankful for the funding opportunities that have presented themselves and feel like they have done a good job of spending those funds on the right projects.



712 Lofts

### Stanton Celebrates Downtown Revitalization

The City of Stanton recently celebrated the completion of their Community Development Block Grant Downtown Revitalization project with a ribbon cutting during a kickoff to summer party on May 23rd. The city was awarded the grant back in 2020 and eight businesses were selected for facade updates.



Stanton Downtown Revitalization Ribbon Cutting led by Community Development Director Jenna Ramsey

Work was completed on the project in September of 2023 and the city continued to make other improvements downtown. The CDBG grant award was for \$445,000 and the city and building owners contribute to reach the overall costs.

Stanton Community Development Director Jenna Ramsey cut a ceremonial ribbon with other community leaders and stakeholders at the May event to celebrate all the work. Food and beverage were available from local businesses, bounce houses for the kids, and Owen Justice performed to kick off their summer concert series.



Concert crowd lined up on Broad Street in downtown Stanton



First Interstate Bank updated facade completion

## SWITA Welcomes Two New Team Members

ATLANTIC- Southwest Iowa Transit Agency (SWITA) has recently added two new members to the office team in Atlantic. Kyle Rock has taken the role of Maintenance Assistant and Michael Wolff was added as a Transit Scheduler.

Kyle comes to SWITA from the AHSTW School District and resides in Avoca. He graduated from Avoca and has a varied work background from teaching/coaching to beverage sales to driving. Kyle said he knew about SWITA’s services for a long time because his sister uses the service, and he came to SWITA to be a driver. It happened to work out that the Maintenance Assistant position would come open around the time he was set to join the team. With his background it was a great fit that gave him the type of hours he was looking for. Kyle will help to maintain the SWITA fleet and facilities, while also helping with driving as needed.

Kyle has enjoyed the work so far, “Everyone has been very welcoming and helpful. The teamwork has been great. We are providing an important service, and you can tell that everyone wants to take care of those we serve.”


Kyle has spent time living in Omaha and Lincoln but likes being back in Avoca and plans to stay there. He has a 17-year-old daughter that lives in Clarinda and two step-grandchildren in the Avoca area.



**Kyle Rock**



**Michael Wolff**

			
		<b>SWITA by the Numbers</b>	
		May 2024	YTD (Since July 1)
Total Miles		179,132	1,768,859
Total Hours		10,108	100,615
Total Rides		50,369	510,612
		May Rides by Service	May Rides by Demographic
Workforce Rides	6,833	Disabled	24,084
Taxi Rides	5,103	Elderly	2,674
Student Rides	5,479	Other Gen. Public	18,701
Other	32,954		

## New SWITA Team Members Continued...

He's an accomplished golfer and typically spends his weekends playing the game somewhere.

Michael comes to SWITA from Austin, Texas. He moved with his fiancé, son, and two dogs to be closer to family in the area. They moved up to Oakland with his parents while they search for a place in Atlantic. He found out about the position from his father, who is a driver for SWITA.

"SWITA really helps a lot of people." Wolff said, "There are people that really need SWITA to get around and I can tell that it's a great community organization. Everyone knows what they are doing here and it's an efficient team environment."

Michael said his family really enjoys playing all types of games together, video and board games especially. He and his fiancé also enjoy painting and creative art projects. His son is very into sports and looking forward to getting involved in activities.

### 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:

- National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Our Town August 1, 2024
- Iowa DNR Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) August 15, 2024
- DOT Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) August 28, 2024
- USDOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Program. August 29, 2024
- IDOT RISE Grant September 1, 2024
- Choose Iowa Grants December 2024

## *Birthdays & Anniversaries*



**Kersten Abild**  
Transit Scheduler II  
Birthday Month



**Rhonda Brown**  
Finance Manager  
7 Years of Service



**Matthew Lee**  
Lead Inspector  
5 Years of Service

## From the Desk of the Executive Director...

**John McCurdy**

### Executive Director

Like most local government entities, June is the end of the SWIPCO fiscal year. That means it's a frantic time of closing out the year while gearing up for the new. New budgets, new programs, and new people. SWIPCO at its core helps people, but it is also important to note that our members are the cities and counties of Southwest Iowa. Yes, we provide public transportation because there is a huge need in our region for, but in reality, the reason we do it and not someone else is because none of the cities and counties that we serve could really provide that service on their own. The same goes for our disaster recovery programs and really everything we do. My goal is that every resident of Southwest Iowa has access to top notch public services no matter where they live.

One of the problems that our members are increasingly turning to us to try and solve are dilapidated or otherwise unsafe buildings. Our building inspectors are very busy, and likewise our planning staff is heavily engaged with updating ordinances and reviewing plans and permits. Because of this need we are adding a new position of a building permit technician to help work with communities, building owners, and contractors through the permit process. Unlike a private consulting firm focused on profit, our goal is to provide a superior service at cost to our member communities, and this position will help bridge the gap that currently exists between what our small-town city halls are able to do with limited resources and the services that our building inspectors provide. In the end our goal in everything that we do is that our members, the cities and counties of Southwest Iowa, are vibrant, healthy, and resilient places to live.

WE ARE  
LOOKING FOR

Building Permit Technician I



**SWIPCO**  
A Bright Look Ahead™

Do you want to help small towns grow? Do you enjoy interacting with the public to solve problems? If you do, Southwest Iowa Planning Council (SWIPCO) has a growing building code department working for city/county clients throughout Southwest Iowa and is looking to fill the new position of Building Permit Technician I. This position works with our clients to process building and zoning applications, answers questions from the public and from builders, and works very closely with SWIPCO's building inspectors to ensure that building codes are enforced. This position also works with renters and landlords on compliance with residential rental ordinances.

This is a full-time, benefitted position including but not limited to sick and vacation leave, health and life insurance, and IPERS retirement. Pay is dependent upon qualifications, but starting wage is anticipated to be \$20/hour. To apply, visit the SWIPCO webpage at [www.swipco.org](http://www.swipco.org). Apply today, as the position is open until filled.

SWIPCO is an equal opportunity employer, provider, and lender

## SWIPCO STAFF

**John McCurdy, AICP**  
Executive Director

**Mark Lander**  
Transit Director

**Erin Hudson**  
Community Development Director

**Karen Mauer**  
Administrative Services Director

**Rhonda Brown**  
Finance Manager

**Daurine Petersen**  
Human Resources Coordinator

**Kersten Abild**  
Transit Scheduler II

**Ann Anstey**  
Grants Specialist II

**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

**Sandy Hansen**  
Grants Specialist III

**Ashley Hayes**  
Disaster Recovery Coordinator

**Julie Hays**  
Transit Scheduler I

**Dee Holtz**  
Administrative Assistant

**Holly Jackson**  
Planner I

**Matthew Lee**  
Building Inspector II

**Brandie McFarland**  
Human Resources Specialist

**Chris Parks**  
Communications Coordinator

**Nicole Rhodes**  
Grants Specialist II

**Phil Richter**  
Building Inspector I

**Kyle Rock**  
Maintenance Assistant

**Kristen Templeton**  
Transit Coordinator

**Michael Wolff**  
Transit Scheduler I

**Teresa Wright**  
Finance Specialist