



# IARCOURIER

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GROWING IOWA'S REGIONS  
FOR OVER 35 YEARS

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Iowa Association of  
Regional Councils

The *IARCourier* is an electronic publication of the Iowa Association of Regional Councils.

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## Mobility management improving transportation services

Mobility management is an innovative approach for managing and delivering coordinated transportation services to customers, including older adults, people with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. Changes in demographics, shifts in land use patterns, and the creation of new and different job markets require new approaches for providing transportation services, particularly for customers with special needs.

Mobility management focuses on meeting individual customer needs through a wide range of options, focusing on service diversity and a "family of transportation services" to reach a wide range of customers. Through the utilization of multiple transportation providers, mobility managers strive to offer the most efficient and effective services to all individuals. The coordination of these services and providers help achieve a more efficient transportation service delivery system for public policy makers and taxpayers who underwrite the cost of service delivery.

Mobility managers serve as policy coordinators, operations service brokers, and customer travel navigators. As policy coordinators, mobility managers help communities develop coordination plans, programs, and policies, and build local partnerships. Mobility management underscores the importance of service advocacy as a way to improve public transportation management and delivery.

Meeting the transportation needs of the community is no easy task, but it can be done if transportation providers, human services and workforce investment agencies, and the community work together to plan and implement services.

For more information on mobility management and its benefits, please contact Statewide Mobility Manager Angie O'Brien at 515.451.3383 or via email at [iarcmobilitymanager@live.com](mailto:iarcmobilitymanager@live.com).

## Iowa COGs lead statewide waste exchange efforts

Through waste diversion and alternative markets, residuals that were once landfilled are generating higher profits for businesses through reuse, increasing sales revenues and reducing costs associated with landfill fees. As companies come to recognize the advantages of operating in a more sustainable manner, they realize the need for technical assistance provided by material exchange programs such as the Iowa Waste Exchange (IWE). IWE is a program of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and has been administered by Region XII Council of Governments in Carroll, since July 1, 2006. In this initiative, Region XII is the lead partner among five agencies, including INRCOG in Waterloo and ECICOG in Cedar Rapids.

The partnership between IDNR and Region XII has assisted the Iowa Waste Exchange in becoming one of the nation's premier waste exchange programs. Since Region XII and the consortium began administering IWE, the program has diverted approximately one million tons of material from the landfill, resulting in a cost savings of just over \$25 million to Iowa businesses. Area resource specialists are located throughout the state, serving all 99 counties from six locations. The range of industrial byproducts matched by area resource specialist includes fibers, sludges, paper, plastic, metals and biomass but is not limited to these materials. A number of unique items have been diverted from the landfill. Finding a home for these unique materials has, at times, taken "outside of the bin" thinking. For example one of these unusual materials included off spec, front-load, domed washing machine windows.

Creating a masterpiece from domed washing machine windows was not much

of a stretch for one imaginative artist. The artist - known as STRETCH – used them in the installation of a 56' x 26' wall. Each dome has colored, programmable LED lights behind it and can be programmed with infinite colors and patterns.

The art work was executed for the Davis Brown Tower's street level interior lobby in downtown Des Moines. The domes were a result of an off spec shipment received by an appliance manufacturer in North Central Iowa. The vendor agreed to pay for the error and instructed staff members to dispose of the windows. Rather than dumping the windows, staff members contacted their area resource specialist, Shelene Codner from Region XII, who contacted STRETCH and found a home for this unusual waste stream.

Area resource specialists also provide other technical assistance to Iowa's businesses including but not limited to writing grants for waste reduction projects and waste related activities. In 2009, Fred Kesten assisted Hycapacity, Inc. of Humboldt, Iowa in writing a Solid Waste Alternatives Program (SWAP) application that resulted in funding and installation of a baler used to launch a plastic recycling program. This program has resulted in the diversion of approximately 89 tons of plastic annually, which equates to a savings of \$16,200 in landfill fees and \$17,000 from reduced transportation costs.



**Artwork created from washing machine windows has been incorporated into the lobby of the Davis Brown Tower in downtown Des Moines.**

## ECIA transforms transit in eastern Iowa

Managing transit systems has become a regular business for the East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA), which is located in Dubuque and covers the counties of Cedar, Clinton, Delaware, Dubuque and Jackson. In 2005, ECIA assumed management of the Region 8 Regional Transit Authority (RTA) which covers Delaware, Dubuque and Jackson counties and since then, has reported ridership increases along with a general increased level of awareness. Annually, the RTA provides over 90,000 rides. However, over the past year, transit management has become ECIA's middle name by adding the city of Dubuque's transit system under its direction. On July 1, 2010, ECIA assumed management of the city of Dubuque transit system and immediately embarked on an inclusive rebranding campaign to change the name and look of the transit system. It started with a community brainstorming session where citizens were invited to contribute name ideas at various locations throughout the City as well as online. Those name ideas were then narrowed down to six choices during a public meeting that were later presented to the City Council, where they voted on the name and color scheme, and after that, The Jule, was born.

In the fall of 2010, The Jule received State of Good Repair and Clean Fuels grants to replace an aging fleet of buses, just in time because most of the vehicles surpassed their useful life expectancy decades ago. The Jule purchased 11 Light Duty buses, 12 medium duty buses and four heavy duty buses (Gilligs). The entire fleet was replaced by August 2011. Over \$350,000 annually will be saved in fuel and maintenance costs while lowering the carbon footprint and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

In January 2011, The Jule was awarded an Iowa Clean Air Attainment Project (ICAAP) grant, which ECIA staff prepared and submitted, to fund a new route called the "Shopping Circulator." This route was recommended in the 2009 LSC Transit Study to make travel between the major shopping areas located on the west side of Dubuque more efficient. Four existing bus routes were modified to increase its coverage area and decrease travel time for passengers. These changes went into effect in November 2011.

The Jule was also recognized this past summer at the Iowa Public Transit Association Conference by the Iowa Department of Transportation as the "Most Improved Urban Transit System" of the year. The Jule provided more than 371,000 rides in 2010, an increase of 10.7 percent, while decreasing the cost per ride by 14.5 percent. Most recently, The Jule received an \$8 million State of Good Repair award from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), which when combined with \$3.5 million in local matching funds will fund construction of the City's intermodal facility and a portion of the required parking. This project is a priority for the City and ECIA staff is proud to have written and submitted a successful application.



## MAPA receives Sustainable Communities award

In November, Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) was awarded \$2,045,000 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Sustainable Communities program. MAPA was one of 29 recipients nationwide to receive a Regional Planning grant through the program.

The Sustainable Communities program is a collaborative effort between HUD, the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency. The program is designed to create stronger, sustainable communities through the connection of jobs, housing and transportation.

This award will be used to develop a long-range vision for the Omaha-Councils Bluffs area. MAPA will lead a consortium of 300+ partners throughout an eight county region to develop a regional plan addressing land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, economic development and public health. The plan will be developed over a three year period. Pottawattamie, Mills and Harrison counties in Iowa and their cities will be participating in the consortium, which will utilize HUD funds to leverage nearly \$1 million in local effort and other federal funds for the project.

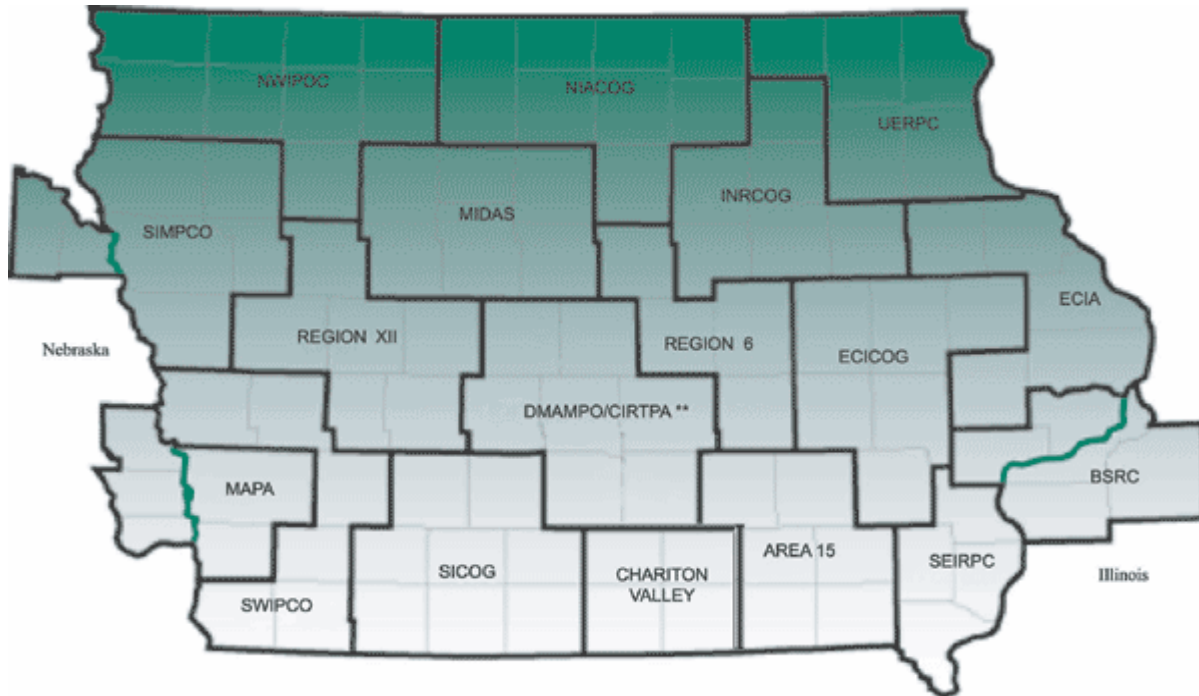
## Bi-State recognized for outstanding regional initiative

At the 2011 National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Annual Training conference, IARC member Bi-State Regional Commission was recognized with a NADO Innovation Award. The NADO Innovation Awards program recognizes creative programs and approaches in regional community and economic development.

Bi-State received the award for its work on the Quad City Interoperability Communication Network. The Quad Cities Interoperable Communications Consortium (QCICC) is a collaboration of seven municipalities and two counties in the Quad Cities metro area of eastern Iowa and western Illinois. In 2005, these local governments jointly applied for and were awarded U.S. Department of Justice Interoperable Communications Technology Program funds. This \$2.1 million federal grant and more than \$700,000 in local funding were used to construct a fiber optic network connecting all Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) in Scott County, Iowa and Rock Island County, Illinois. The QCICC acted as the steering committee for the design and construction of the network. Now known as the Quad Cities Interoperable Communications Network (QCIC NET), the 40 mile-long, public safety fiber optic network network was completed and become operational on September 30, 2010.



Mark Hunt, with Bi-State Regional Commission, receives the agency's NADO Innovation Award from NADO President Tim Ware.



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### IARC presents 2011 “Friend of the COGs” awards

IARC Board of Directors with 2011 “Friend of the COGs” award recipient Rep. Jason Schultz



IARC Board of Directors with 2011 “Friend of the COGs” award recipient Sen. Steve Soddors



In November, IARC presented its 2011 “Friend of the COGs” awards to Senator Steve Soddors and Representative Jason Schultz. IARC makes this award each year to partners that assist the COGs in providing services to local governments and support the mission of Iowa’s COGs.

Senator Soddors and Representative Schultz have worked in the Iowa legislature to support state COG assistance funding, helping to ensure Iowa’s communities and counties receive services from their regional COG.