



IARCCOURIER

Winter 2008

GROWING IOWA'S REGIONS
FOR OVER 35 YEARS

Volume 1, Issue 1

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Regional Councils Continue to Grow Iowa

In the early to mid 70's, city and county officials in the state of Iowa were meeting across city and county lines to discuss the benefits of regional cooperation. The result of those meetings and discussions is the seventeen regional planning agencies known as Iowa's Councils of Governments (COGs). Iowa's COGs have been as dynamic as the state itself over those thirty-some years. People, programs, even boundaries have changed. But the commitment to regional cooperation remains steadfast, and the meetings and discussions continue.

The Iowa Association of Regional Councils is the statewide association serving Iowa's COGs. In this inaugural issue of the association's newsletter, we hope to show you just how far we have come in the last thirty years. We've highlighted recent accomplishments in transportation planning, housing development, workforce development, public transit, economic development, and in expanding opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation.



We'll continue to highlight accomplishments in future quarterly newsletters. More importantly, we hope that the newsletter expands that forum for discussion that COGs so uniquely provide. We look forward to your comments and suggestions, and to the opportunity to continue to tell you the story of Iowa's Council of Governments.

Chairperson
MJ Broomfield



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

Editors
Doug Elliott, Executive Director, ECICOG
Brian Tapp, Executive Director, SEIRPC

Contributing Editors
MJ Broomfield, Executive Director, SWIPCO
Kelley H. Deutmeyer, Executive Director, ECIA
Tom Masey, Executive Director, UERPC
Joe Myhre, Executive Director, NIACOG
Rick Hunsaker, Executive Director, Region XII COG

To be placed on the mailing list for the *IARCourier*, contact IARC@creative-meetings.com

www.iarcog.com

Region 2 Transit Meets Employers Needs

The North Iowa Area Council of Governments - Region 2 Transit has expanded its service hours to meet a growing demand for evening and weekend transit service for area employers.

With the financial support from the Iowa Department of Transportation, Job Access Reverse Commute Program (JARC), Region 2 Transit was able to expand its hours of service in Cerro Gordo County by offering 6:00 p.m.—10:00 p.m. transit service Monday - Friday and from 8:00 a.m. - noon on Saturdays.

As a result of this service,

Region 2 Transit has seen a marked increase in its ridership. In fact due to the popularity of the service, Region 2 is currently negotiating with area



industries to add another bus to the route.

The goals of the program (JARC) are to improve access to transportation services to

employment and employment related activities for welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals, and to transport residents of urbanized areas and nonurbanized areas to suburban employment opportunities. Toward this goal, the Federal Transit Administration provides financial assistance for transportation services planned, designed, and carried out to meet the transportation needs of eligible low-income individuals, and of reverse commuters regardless of income.

ECIA Keeps the Region Revolving



ECIA assisted Mi-T-M Corp. of Peosta, with a \$4,000,000 Loan

Through its subsidiary E.C.I.A. Business Growth, Inc., ECIA set a record in assistance to local businesses in 2007. With the approval of **\$1.9 million** in EDA loans, ECIA Business Growth expanded the total funded loans to **\$6.6 million**. Current programs include:

- EDA Revolving Loan Fund
- Jackson County Revolving Loan Fund (for Jackson County projects only)
- Dubuque County Intermediary Revolving Loan Fund (for Dubuque County projects outside city limits of Dubuque)
- ECIA Regional Revolving Loan Fund



The programs provide similar benefits and include:

providing gap financing, meeting local match dollar requirement for IDED funding, creating jobs and wealth, stimulating and diversifying the local economy, and generating spin-offs.

Projects funded in 2007, which helped set the \$6.6 million record, included five SBA loans and two EDA RLF Loans.

Region XII Builds Housing & Partnerships



Vision Health Care, Inc. of Dubuque, received a \$386,000 loan through ECIA

Traditionally Iowa's COGs were involved in housing either as administrators of regional housing authorities (RHA) or as operators of rehabilitation programs. But as interest in issues facing Iowa's housing stock increased in the 1990s, so did the involvement of its councils of governments.

Region XII COG is a shining example of the COG's expanded role in addressing Iowa's housing needs. The COG founded the RHA in the 1970's, but soon spun it off. It wasn't until 1991 that the COG applied for and received its first housing rehabilitation award - a \$100,000 grant from USDA for small emergency repairs to low-income homeowners.

Since then, Region XII COG has administered \$19.3 million in housing funds for a variety of uses. These include:

- \$9.4 million to

rehabilitate 1,042 owner-occupied units

- \$1.7 million for flood relief to 138 families
- \$300,000 to rehabilitate 22 rental units
- \$5.3 million to provide downpayment assistance to 290 families
- \$1 million to provide financing for the construction of 37 affordable single-family homes

providing the region with a base for housing endeavors in future years when state and federal funding many not be available. Most projects also have a grant component. In fact, much of the assistance is provided as grant to the homeowner.

While programs are designed at the state and federal level for a specific need or purpose, they do not often meet all client needs.

Region XII mitigates these problems by blending funds from various programs. To the homeowner it is one program meeting their housing needs. To the COG, it can be up to five funding sources coming together to jointly provide safe, decent, and sanitary housing.

As housing continues to be challenging, Iowa's COGs continue to rise to the challenge to provide maximum benefit to Iowa's citizens.



- \$600,000 for the construction of 12 new affordable rental units
- \$425,000 for programs of the regional housing trust fund, assisting 100 families
- \$469,300 to acquire and demolish 28 dilapidated and vacant houses

To the extent possible, Region XII COG loans the funds at low interest rates. Repayments are revolved to new beneficiaries each year,



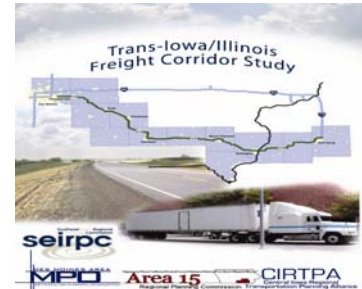
Region XII is completing three Speculative Homes in Conjunction with DMACC

COGs Grow Coalitions

In Spring 2007, four Iowa planning bodies - the Area 15 Regional Planning Commission, the Central Iowa Regional Transportation Planning Alliance, the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, and the Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission - completed the Trans Iowa/Illinois Freight Corridor Study. The study analyzed the potential for the Iowa 163, U.S. 63, and U.S. 34 corridors to provide efficient movement of freight from Interstates 35 and 80 in the Des Moines metropolitan area to Interstate 74 in Galesburg, Illinois. The study concluded that the Trans Iowa/Illinois Freight Corridor would provide a viable alternative to the increasingly congested Interstate 74 and Interstate 80 corridor, particularly for freight shipments between the Midwestern and Southeastern sections of the United States.

After the study's completion, the four planning bodies acted quickly to implement the Trans Iowa/Illinois Freight Corridor Consortium, a primary recommendation of the study. The consortium will foster coordinated decision making along the corridor with regard to land use and access management, will promote economic development along the corridor, will encourage the expansion of the remaining two-lane sections of the corridor to four-lanes, and will market the corridor as an alternative to the interstate system.

The Consortium is just one recent example of Iowa's COGs working across jurisdictional boundaries to address issues important to citizens across the state.



Area XV, SEIRPC, and the Des Moines MPO coordinated efforts for the Trans Iowa Illinois Corridor Study

COG Coalition Assists Workforce

During the last year, Region 1 Employment and Training of Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission assisted 234 Iowans with their employment needs. UERPC is one of four COGs that deliver workforce development programs.

Counties. WIA has three programs: Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker. Eligibility for Youth Programs is based on household income guidelines and meeting at least one other



Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission

Region 1 Employment and Training administers two programs: the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and PROMISE JOBS. These programs are cooperatively delivered to the eight-county area of Allamakee, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, Howard and Winneshiek counties.

WIA is jointly administered with ECIA of Dubuque for Dubuque and Delaware

criteria, high school drop out, pregnant or parenting youth, offender, and basic skills deficiencies are among the eligibility criteria. Eligibility for Adult program services is based on household income guidelines, while the Dislocated Worker Program is based on unemployment status. WIA offers assistance through

classroom training, pre-employment and on-the-job training.

PROMISE JOBS is jointly administered with ECIA and Iowa Workforce Development, and is Iowa's "Welfare Reform" program funded by the Department of Human Services and co-administered by Iowa Workforce Development and the WIA Service Providers statewide. Current Iowa legislation limits cash welfare benefits for families to a maximum lifetime limit of 60 months. PROMISE JOBS assists welfare recipients in the development and implementation of an individualized plan for achieving self-sufficiency.



Numerous COGs provide traffic counting services for their member cities and counties



Various COGs provide workforce assistance to their region

IARC's Return On Investment



IARC Members program more than

\$31 million

In transportation dollars annually



Nearly

2 million

Transit Rides were provided by IARC Members in FY 2007

More than

\$4 million

in loans have assisted Iowa Businesses in the past year



IARC members employ more than

225 Iowans

to grow their regions



IARC Members write & administer more than

\$75 million in grants annually

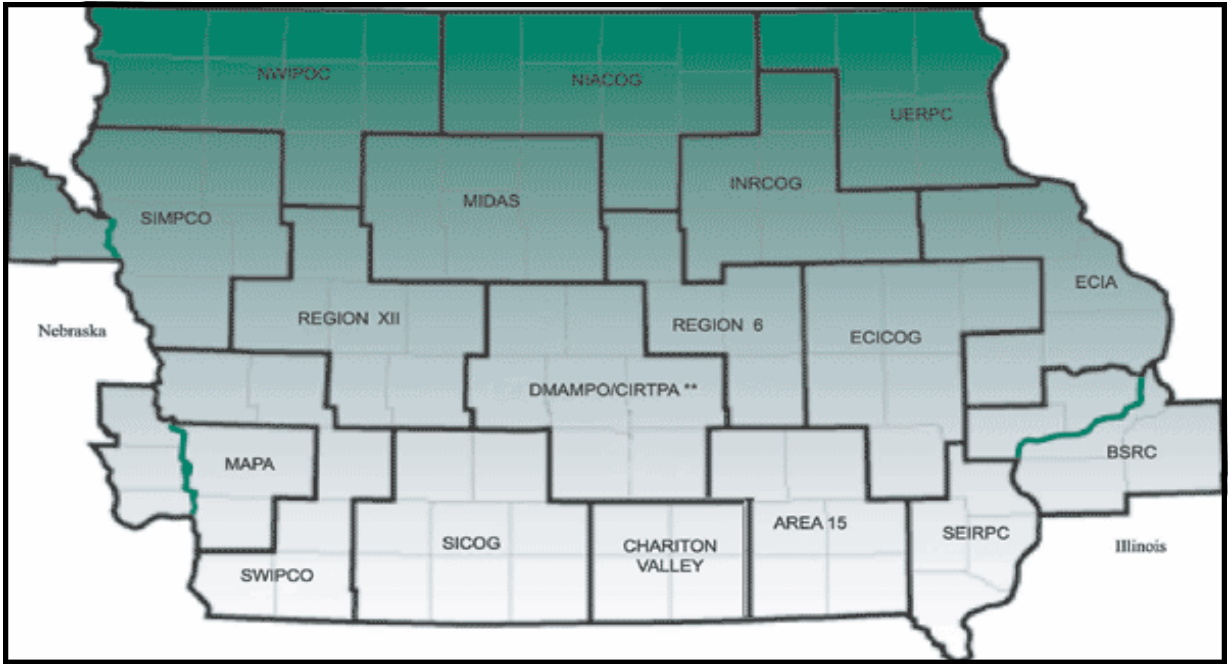
More than

750 housing units

are currently being rehabilitated by IARC members



www.iarccog.com



Area 15 Regional Planning Commission

651 Indian Hills Drive, Bldg. 17
PO Box 1110
Ottumwa, IA 52501
Phone (641) 684-6551
Davis, Jefferson, Keokuk, Mahaska, Van Buren, and Wapello Counties
www.area15rpc.com

Bi-State Regional Commission

1504 Third Ave., PO Box 3368
Rock Island, IL 61204-3368
Phone (309) 793-6300
Henry, Mercer (IL), Muscatine, Rock Island (IL), and Scott Counties
www.bistateonline.org

Central Iowa Regional Transportation Planning Alliance

Merle Hay Centre
6200 Aurora Avenue, Suite 300W
Urbandale, Iowa 50322-2866
Phone (515) 334-0075
Boone, Dallas, Jasper, Madison, Marion, Story, Polk, and Warren Counties
www.dmampo.org/CIRTPA/CIRTPA_index.html

Chariton Valley Planning & Development

Historical Courthouse Square District
205 1/2 N. 13th St.
Centerville, IA 52544
Phone (641) 437-4359
Appanoose, Lucas, Monroe and Wayne Counties
www.charitonvalleyplanning.com

East Central Intergovernmental Association

3999 Pennsylvania Ave., Suite 200
Dubuque, IA 52002
Phone (563) 556-4166
Cedar, Clinton, Delaware, Dubuque, Jackson Counties
www.ecia.org

East Central Iowa Council of Governments

700 16th St., NE Suite 301
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402
Phone (319) 365-9941
Benton, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, Washington Counties
www.ecicog.org

Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments

229 E. Park Ave.
Waterloo, IA 50703
Phone (319) 235-0311
Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, Grundy Counties
www.inrcog.org

Metropolitan Area Planning Agency

2222 Cuming
Omaha, NE 68012
Phone (402) 444-6866
Douglas (NE), Mills, Pottawattamie, Sarpy (NE), Washington Counties
www.mapacog.org

MIDAS Council of Governments

602 First Ave. South
Fort Dodge, IA 50501
Phone (515) 576-7183
Calhoun, Hamilton, Humboldt, Pocahontas, Webster, Wright Counties
www.midascog.org

North Iowa Area Council of Governments

525 Sixth St., SW
Mason City, IA 50401
Phone (641) 423-0491
Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Kossuth, Mitchell, Winnebago, Worth Counties
www.niacog.org

Northwest Iowa Planning & Development Commission

217 W. Fifth St., PO Box 1493
Spencer, IA 51301
Phone (712) 262-7225
Buena Vista, Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Lyon, O'Brien, Osceola, Palo Alto, Sioux Counties
www.nwipdc.org

Region 6 Planning Commission

905 E. Main St., Suite A
Marshalltown, IA 50158
Phone (641) 752-0717
Hardin, Marshall, Poweshiek, Tama Counties
www.region6planning.org

Region XII Council of Governments

1009 East Anthony St., PO Box 768
Carroll, IA 51401
Phone (712) 792-9914
Audubon, Carroll, Crawford, Greene, Guthrie, Sac, Dallas Counties
www.region12cog.org

Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council

1122 Pierce Street
PO Box 1077
Sioux City, IA 51102
Phone (712) 279-6286
Cherokee, Dakota, Dixon, Ida, Monona, Plymouth, Woodbury Counties
www.simpco.org

Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission

200 Front St., Suite 400, PO Box 397
Burlington, IA 52601
Phone (319) 753-5107
Des Moines, Henry, Lee, Louisa Counties
www.seirpc.com

Southern Iowa Council of Governments

101 East Montgomery St.
Creston, IA 50801-0102
Phone (641) 782-8491
Adams, Clarke, Decatur, Madison, Ringgold, Taylor, Union Counties
www.sicog.com

Southwest Iowa Planning Council

1501 SW Seventh St.
Atlantic, IA 50022
Phone (712) 243-4196
Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie, Shelby Counties
www.swipco.org

Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission

134 West Greene St., PO Box 219
Postville, IA 52162
Phone (563) 864-7551
Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette, Howard, Winneshiek Counties

** Not a Council of Governments



IARC

Attn: Nancy Herselius, CMP

PO Box 249

Bondurant, IA 50035

Phone 515.480.2420

Fax 515.967.0299

nancy@creative-meetings.com

What is a Council of Governments?

Created more than thirty years ago by visionary public leaders, Iowa's Councils of Governments (COGs) provide professional planning, programming, and technical assistance to Iowa's cities, counties, businesses, community organizations and Iowans of all ages.

COGs are indigenous organizations formed by counties, cities and towns to serve local governments and their regional citizenry. Their governing boards are made up of local elected officials, business and education leaders, economic development professionals, and individual citizens.

COGs provide regional planning and technical assistance to local governments and the communities in their regions by:

- Providing individualized assistance to cities, counties, businesses, community organizations and community members

- Providing planning services across multiple jurisdictions and
- Providing a forum that combines the elements of transportation planning, housing development, solid waste planning, land use planning, workforce development, and economic development into a comprehensive approach to regional growth and development.

To ensure the vitality and growth of their regions, COGs actively pursue funding opportunities from a variety of local, state, and federal resources. They provide expertise to cities and counties in securing competitive state and federal grants.

As Regional Planning Affiliations, COGs plan for and program the distribution of federal transportation funds within their regions, including highways, transit, trails, and other

enhancement programs. Most COGs also have established and administer regional revolving loan funds targeting housing and economic development.

For more than thirty years, COGs have been growing Iowa's communities, Iowa's businesses, Iowa's leaders, Iowa's regions, and Iowa's future.

