

January - March 2018

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**Iowa Northland Regional
Council of Governments**
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GRANTS AWARDED

The following grants were written by INRCOG and awarded October-December 2017. If you would like more information, please contact [Kevin Blanshan](#).

| Grant | Jurisdiction | Amount | Project |
|------------------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| CDBG-Water/Sewer | City of Winthrop | \$300,000 | Wastewater Treatment Improvements |
| REAP | City of Dunkerton | \$50,000 | Public Space Acquisition |
| REAP | City of Allison | \$75,000 | Wilder Park Expansion |
| Iowa Finance Authority | INRHC | \$312,626 | Housing Trust Fund |
| Iowa Finance Authority | City of Waterloo | \$132,000 | Housing Trust Fund |

Ed Holm Named 2017 INRCOG Regional Citizen of the Year

At INRCOG's Annual Board Meeting on December 21st, Executive Director Kevin Blanshan presented the 2017 INRCOG Regional Citizen of the Year Award to Ed Holm.

Holm is currently INRCOG's Director of Transit and is responsible for the operations of the Iowa Northland Regional Transit Commission. Blanshan explained that to be chosen as Regional Citizen of the Year, recipients must have a passion for what they do, be a patient listener, make difficult decisions with a focus on improving the lives of others with professionalism and a great deal of care. Blanshan continued that "although this year's recipient is a little non-traditional, he certainly meets all of the qualifications." "He has dealt with many difficult situations, none more difficult than the switch to privatizing Medicaid and the impact that has and will have on our agency. He has approached this professionally and provided well thought out solutions..." Blanshan further noted that "perhaps his greatest attribute is...he genuinely cares about our transit users!"

Blanshan concluded that "after 15 plus years and nearly 700,000 rides", Holm will retire at the end of January, 2018. Congratulations, Ed!



INRCOG Citizen of the Year Ed Holm with Executive Director Kevin Blanshan (left) and Chair, Frank Magsamen (right).

INRCOG Staff Donates to the Black Hawk County Commission of Veteran Affairs

During 2017, INRCOG's staff donated a total of \$1,450 to the Black Hawk County Commission of Veteran Affairs whose office provides assistance to local Veterans in a variety of ways.



INRCOG staff presents a donation to Executive Director Kevin Dill and Bob Walker with the Black Hawk County Commissions of Veterans Affairs.

In April, staff donated \$380 to be a sponsor for the first annual "Cedar Valley Cycling for Veterans Ride". Then on December 22nd, staff presented an additional \$1,070 raised during the remainder of the year to Kevin Dill, Executive Director, and Bob Walker at INRCOG's office.

In December, INRCOG staff also participated in the Lowell Elementary School (Waterloo) Adopt-A-Family project; everyone was pleased to help a family in need during the holiday season.



Executive Board

Frank Magsamen Chair
Black Hawk County Supervisor
 Duane Hildebrandt Vice-Chair
Bremer County Supervisor
 Mark Schildroth Secretary
Grundy County Supervisor
 Gary Gissel Treasurer
Buchanan County Supervisor

At-Large Members

Jim Brown
Mayor of Cedar Falls
 Steve Geerts
Chickasaw County Supervisor
 Quentin Hart
Mayor of Waterloo
 Charles Infelt
Mayor of Waverly
 Larry Young
Mayor of Shell Rock

INRCOG Participates in Legislative Event

In December, INRCOG participated in a Legislative Event hosted by VGM in Waterloo and sponsored by the Iowa League of Cities and the cities of Waterloo and Cedar Falls. The event, attended by several area legislators, local elected officials and staff, provided each Legislator the opportunity to provide insight into the upcoming Legislative Session. This was followed by dialogue relating to the League of Cities' priorities including local control; economic development, financial stability, and the continuation of the backfill; public safety; water and wastewater infrastructure; and pensions.

This event was a great opportunity to discuss issues that are important to local governments as we prepare for the 2018 Legislative Session. Kevin Blanshan, Brian Schoon, and Jacob Tjaden represented INRCOG for the evening.

INRCOG Receives National Household Travel Survey Data

Over the last year, a total of 1,221 households were surveyed in the Black Hawk County metropolitan area as part of the National Household Travel Survey (NHTS). Survey respondents completed a one-day travel log and a questionnaire about their travel habits. This survey was conducted by a team of federal researchers and should be regarded as the most accurate and comprehensive travel data available in Black Hawk County.

INRCOG staff has begun analyzing the unweighted data for use in the development of the Pedestrian Master Plan. The weighted data is expected to be received in January and will be used to update the travel demand model for the Long Range Transportation Plan.

For questions about the NHTS, contact [Kyle Durant](#) or [Codie Leseman](#).

REAP Awards Announced

The cities of Dunkerton and Allison were recently awarded Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) funds by the Department of Natural Resources. Allison was awarded \$75,000 to expand Wilder Park through the acquisition of 17.5 acres of land to be developed into public woodlands, prairie, and open space. The City of Dunkerton was awarded \$50,000 to acquire approximately 5.5 acres of land to be dedicated as public space. Within the area, the project calls for infiltration and drainage improvements, plantings, and construction of a recreational trail.

Since its inception in 1989, the REAP program has provided millions of dollars towards the preservation of open space and the development of outdoor recreation projects throughout the state. Contact [Kyle Durant](#) or [Jacob Tjaden](#) for more information on the REAP program.

Housing Trust Fund Awards

Both the Iowa Northland Regional Housing Council (INRHC) and the Waterloo Housing Trust Fund (WHTF) were recently awarded funding for 2018-2019 from the Iowa Finance Authority.

The INRHC, staffed by INRCOG, received \$312,626 which will be used for projects for Iowa Heartland Habitat for Humanity, Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation, Bremer County Community Based Services, USDA housing facility rehabilitation projects, and continued support of the INRHC's Rural Repair Program. This State Housing Trust Fund award will be matched with local funds totalling \$93,788 from the participating agencies.

Complementing the INRHC, the WHTF is a standalone non-profit local housing trust fund that seeks to improve housing in the City of Waterloo. The WHTF will focus their efforts on emergency sheltering and transitional housing; owner-occupied rehab and repair; and accessibility rehab and repair. The award of \$132,000 will be matched by \$33,000 in local funds, and its Board of Directors will solicit Requests for Proposals to help implement their activities.

If you have any questions about either of these awards, please contact [Brian Schoon](#), [Cindy Knox](#), or [Rose Phillips](#).

RTC Receives New Vehicles

The Regional Transit Commission recently received a new light duty bus and two new minivans. The bus was funded in part through a grant secured by the Iowa Dept. of Transportation from the Federal Transit Administration on behalf of Iowa transit systems and will replace one that has been in service for the past twelve years.

The two minivans were purchased using local funds and will be a great addition to RTC's fleet, primarily providing economical services for trips with three or fewer passengers. The minivans are equipped with two wheelchair securement locations and a manual ramp making them ADA accessible.

For more information regarding transit services available from RTC, contact [Ed Holm](#) or [Linda Sires](#).



RTC ADA-accessible van.

La Porte City Housing Needs Assessment Underway

La Porte City has contracted with INRCOG to perform a housing needs assessment. A main focus is how to get non-residents interested in the housing stock within La Porte City. With a housing needs assessment, the City and the residents will better understand the true housing opportunities and issues within the community. The assessment will provide hard data on the size, pricing, and availability of the City's ownership and rental markets and will compare the City's housing policies and incentives to other communities in the area. The goal is to make a range of planning tools available to the City, including ways to revitalize housing stock, new construction tax credits, TIF programs, and grant opportunities.

To discuss how a Housing Needs Assessment can benefit your community, contact [Brian Schoon](#) or [Rose Phillips](#).

City of Winthrop Awarded CDBG Funds

The City of Winthrop was recently awarded \$300,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for upgrades to the city's sanitary sewer system. Project elements include the upsizing of an existing pump station, lagoon improvements, addition of ultraviolet disinfection, and measures to reduce infiltration and inflow into the collection system.

The CDBG program is federally funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Iowa Economic Development Authority is responsible for administering the CDBG funds in the non-metropolitan areas of the state. For more information regarding CDBG programs, contact [Brian Schoon](#) or [Jacob Tjaden](#).

Independence Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Mapping

INRCOG recently mapped the City of Independence's 14 Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts. This included conversion of the legal descriptions to a map which allows City staff and elected officials the ability to better visualize those areas.

The project provided the City with an overview map delineating all the TIF districts; a simplified map of each district; a detailed map of each district identifying the ordinance number, year of adoption, and areas of duplication or overlap; and a detailed map of each district utilizing aerial photography from 2017.

For more information regarding TIF, contact [Brian Schoon](#); for information regarding mapping and GIS services, contact [Dan Schlichtmann](#).

Iowa Waste Exchange Success Story

After being contacted by the Black Hawk County Landfill, INRCOG Environmental Planner and Area 3 IWE Resource Specialist, Ben Kvigne, worked with BestCob, located in Independence, to find an alternative to disposing some of their waste material in the landfill. BestCob has structured their business around processing kernel-free corn cobs that are by-products of seed corn companies after harvesting the seed corn. During harvest season, BestCob receives about 25 semi loads of cobs per day which, are stored in a clean, dry environment until they are processed into a variety of products. The processing consists of grinding, cleaning, and sifting and, if necessary, regrinding or pelletizing. The end product is sold for such things as blasting grit, mushroom cultivation media, animal bedding, kitty litter, pesticide carrier, carriers for animal feed additives, animal pharmaceutical carriers, chemical and oil absorbent material, and filler for plastic and composite products. Unfortunately, some of the cobs get contaminated by moisture, dirt, mold, etc., and must be separated and disposed. Kvigne was able to refer BestCob to a local sawmill that sells composting mix to farmers for the purpose of composting dead livestock. The sawmill was happy to accept the material and so far, has taken in 30 tons. According to BestCob, this IWE assistance resulted in savings for the company from landfill tipping fees, dumpster charges, and trucking costs. This business connection will likely continue and both BestCob and the sawmill will continue to reap the benefits of the IWE assistance.

For information about Iowa Waste Exchange, contact [Ben Kvigne](#).



Delivery of corn cobs at BestCob located in Independence, Iowa.

INRCOG Assists with Cedar Valley Trail and Outdoor Recreation Guide Update

INRCOG staff recently completed updates to the Cedar Valley Trails and Recreation Guide with input and assistance from the Black Hawk County Conservation Board, Cedar Falls Tourism and Visitors Bureau, Waterloo Convention and Visitors Bureau, Iowa DNR, and the cities of Cedar Falls and Waterloo. The guide provides information on recreational opportunities in Black Hawk County including maps of the extensive trail system, water trails, parks, bike lanes, and other outdoor amenities. This update also includes the U.S. National Grid which provides a geographic framework to identify a particular place. Printing of the guide was made possible by a number of area sponsors who will have copies available for distribution. Watch for a link to the Cedar Valley Trails and Recreation Guide on INRCOG's website at www.inrcog.org in the coming weeks.

Calendar

January

- 1 Monday
Office Closed for Holiday
- 11 Thursday
10:00 a.m.
MPO Technical and Board
- 15 Monday
Office Closed for Holiday
- 18 Thursday
12:00 Noon
INRCOG Executive Committee
1:00 p.m.
Regional Transportation Authority
- 31 12:00 Noon
City Clerks/County Auditors Assn.

February

- 8 Thursday
10:00 a.m.
MPO Technical and Board
- 15 Thursday
10:30 a.m.
INREDC Board
12:00 Noon
INRCOG Executive Committee
1:00 p.m.
Regional Transportation Authority
- 19 Monday
Office Closed for Holiday

March

- 8 Thursday
10:00 a.m.
MPO Technical and Board
- 22 Thursday
10:30 a.m.
RTC Advisory Committee
11:30 a.m.
INRCOG Executive Committee
12:00 Noon
INRCOG Board
1:00 p.m.
Regional Transportation Authority
3:00 p.m.
Iowa Northland Regional
Housing Council
- 28 12:00 Noon
City Clerks/County Auditors Assn.
- 30 Friday
Office Closed for Holiday

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

| <u>Grant</u> | <u>Deadline</u> |
|--|-----------------|
| Land and Water Conservation Fund | March 15, 2018 |
| CDBG – Water and Sewer Fund | April 1, 2018 |
| Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) | April 15, 2018 |
| CDBG – Community Facilities and Services | April 20, 2018 |
| CDBG – Downtown Revitalization | April 27, 2018 |
| CDBG – Housing Sustainability | May 4, 2018 |
| CDBG – CareerLink | Ongoing |
| CDBG – Economic Development Set Aside | Ongoing |
| Revitalize Iowa’s Sound Economy (RISE) – Immediate Opportunity | As Needed |

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program is a federally funded grant program administered by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources that provides matching funds up to 50 percent for outdoor recreation area development and acquisition. Iowa’s cities and counties are eligible to participate. Competition for funding is intense, but this program provides an opportunity to develop a wide range of outdoor recreational projects that are in high demand. Popular projects in recent years have included skate parks, playgrounds, new and renovated swimming pools, sport complexes, campgrounds, and multipurpose trails. Applications are due March 15, 2018. Contact [Jacob Tjaden](#), [Codie Leseman](#), or [Kyle Durant](#) for information.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The federal CDBG program is authorized under the Housing and Community Development Act and all projects must meet one of the National Objectives as defined by HUD, which include: benefit to low-moderate-income persons, aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or having an urgent need. In Iowa, the CDBG program can be used to fund eligible activities including public assets such as water and sewer infrastructure and community facilities, housing rehabilitation, economic development efforts, and downtown revitalization. We encourage cities that have a project that may be eligible for CDBG funding to contact INRCOG as soon as possible for assistance with the pre-application requirements and the application process. Contact [Brian Schoon](#) or [Jacob Tjaden](#) for additional details.

Water and Sewer Fund

Funds awarded through this annual competitive program assist cities and counties with projects such as sanitary sewer system improvements, water system improvements, water and wastewater treatment facility projects, storm sewer projects related to sanitary sewer system improvements and rural water connections. The goal of this program is to provide economic opportunities for people, especially those of low- and moderate-income. Funding is based on community population. Applications are accepted on a quarterly basis with applications next due by April 1, 2018.

Community Facilities and Services

This annual competitive program offers grants to assist communities for a variety of projects including day care facilities, senior centers, vocational workshops and other community services such as storm water projects. The amount of assistance communities may apply for is based on city’s population. Applications are due April 20, 2018.

Downtown Revitalization

The Downtown Revitalization Fund provides grants to communities for a variety of projects and activities contributing to comprehensive revitalization in historic city centers. The proposed activity must demonstrate how the activity will alleviate or eliminate the conditions causing slum and blight. To date, the program has funded façade improvements to privately owned buildings. Applications are due April 27, 2018.

Housing Sustainability

Applications for rehabilitation of owner-occupied, single family homes are due May 4, 2018. Assisted homeowners (residents served by the project) must be low- to moderate-income which are persons with income at or below 80 percent of the area median income as defined by the US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development.

Career Link (Employment Transportation)

The Career Link Employment Transportation program can be used to address employment barriers by providing funding for employment related transportation services. Eligible activities include transportation services for individuals to job activities and adult students to educational training/instructional opportunities. Applications for this program are accepted on an on-going basis.

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IOWA NORTHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) continued

Economic Development Set-Aside

This program provides financial assistance (direct or forgivable loans) to businesses and industries requiring such assistance in order to create new job opportunities. Assistance is provided to encourage new business start-ups, expansion of existing businesses and/or the relocation of out-of-state businesses into Iowa with priority is given to projects that will create manufacturing jobs, add value to Iowa resources and/or increase exports out of state. Preference will be given to those businesses which will create or retain the greatest number of jobs with the least amount of program dollars. Applications for this program are accepted and reviewed on a continuous basis.

Community Attraction & Tourism Program (CAT)

The Community Attraction & Tourism (CAT) Program is an opportunity for cities, counties and non-profit organizations to ask for financial assistance for vertical infrastructure projects including museums, recreation centers, aquatic centers, sports arenas and other attractions. Applications are submitted to the Iowa Economic Development Authority and the Vision Iowa Board on a quarterly basis. Applicants are reminded that the Vision Iowa Board will require city, county and private funding for each project. Contact [Kyle Durant](#) for information.

Revitalize Iowa’s Sound Economy (RISE) – Immediate Opportunity

Revitalize Iowa’s Sound Economy Immediate Opportunity (IO) funds through the Iowa DOT require an immediate funding commitment to secure developers or firms in the location of business facilities that will result in permanent job creation or retention. IO projects may be located on primary roads, secondary roads, city streets, state park roads, or county conservation parkways. All incorporated cities and counties are eligible to apply for RISE IO funds. Applications are submitted on a year-round basis. For more information, contact [Kevin Blanshan](#) or [Kyle Durant](#).

INRCOG Staff

Kevin BlanshanExecutive Director
Brian SchoonDirector of Development
Ed HolmDirector of Transit
Sheri AlldredgeDirector of Administrative Services
Kyle DurantTransportation Planner
Cindy KnoxHousing Planner
Ben KvigneEnvironmental Planner
Codie LelemanTransportation Planner
Ryan McKinleyCommunity Planner
Rose PhillipsHousing Planner
Brenda PontoAccountant
Jacki ScharesSafe Routes to School Coordinator
Dan SchlichtmannData Services Coordinator
Linda SiresTransit Operations Assistant
Jacob TjadenCommunity Planner
Hayley WeigleinAdministrative Assistant



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