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# NIACOG

## NEWS

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Vol. 19 No. 1

NORTH IOWA AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

February, 2007

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### **Snap-On Tools Awarded \$1,000,000**

Congratulations to Snap-On Tools and the City of Algona for the recently announced grant award from the Iowa Department of Economic Development for a \$1 million forgivable loan under the Physical Infrastructure Assistance Program. NIACOG staff prepared and assisted with the grant application to assist the City of Algona competing for a \$12 million expansion at Snap-On Tools. The project will result in 31 new jobs and upgrades to the plant's advanced manufacturing and distribution center. Two of the new jobs and 315 retained jobs pay an average wage of \$17.72 per hour.

Snap-On develops, produces and markets tools and equipment for automotive diagnostics, transportation service, construction and other commercial applications. The Algona plant is the only Snap-On plant in the U.S. producing tool storage units with a reputation for 'world class' quality. Snap-on recently celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Algona.

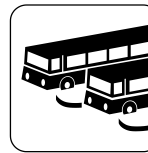
### **NIACOG Membership Dues Increase**

The Board of Directors of the North Iowa Area Council of Governments, at their November 13, 2006 meeting, unanimously approved a 14¢ per capita increase in the NIACOG dues to be phased in over two years at 7¢ per year. The assessment for FY 08 will increase to 54¢ per capita and to 61¢ per capita for FY 09. This increase was the direct result of a 25% increase by the federal government to the local match requirements for the agency's annual Economic Development Administration (EDA) planning grant. In addition, the agency received a 38% funding increase in the Surface Transportation Program (STP) also requiring additional match. In order to remain eligible for these matching grants, the agency has to show a local match commitment from its member governments, thus the increase in the membership assessment.

### **NIMS Compliance Deadline**

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) is intended to provide a framework for local, state, and federal government to work together to respond to any domestic hazard, whether a natural disaster or terror incident. Cities had to be NIMS compliant by September 30, 2006, in order to receive future federal preparedness dollars. There are various actions that cities need to take to become compliant with NIMS. For more information, the city should visit with their county emergency management coordinator or contact the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division at (515) 281-3231.

### **Study: Public Transportation Saves Households \$6,200**



Public transportation use saves 1.4 billion gallons of gasoline every year and can reduce household expenses by \$6,200, according to a new American Public Transportation Association (APTA) study.

"This should be a wake-up call as Congress and the President discuss how America can move towards energy independence," said APTA President William W. Millar.

The study revealed that public transportation usage reduces U.S. gasoline consumption by 1.4 billion gallons each year — equivalent to 108 million cars filling up.

These savings result from the efficiency of carrying multiple passengers in each vehicle; the reduction in traffic congestion from fewer automobiles on the roads; and, the varied sources of energy for public transportation.

The report also noted that households that are likely to use public transportation on a given day save more than \$6,200 every year, compared to a household with no access to public transportation service.

The full report, "Public Transportation and Petroleum Savings in the U.S.: Reducing Dependence on Oil," prepared for APTA by ICF International, can be found online at [www.apta.com](http://www.apta.com).

### **Passenger Assistance Training. "Train-the-Trainer" Course To Be Held**

The Iowa DOT will be sponsoring a Passenger Assistance Techniques 'train-the-trainer' course to be held on June 25-27, 2007. The training will be held at the North Iowa Joint Use Transit Facility in Mason City.

Classes will be limited to about 15 people. If more than 15 are interested in attending, we will likely hold a second class starting on Wednesday afternoon, June 27 and continuing through Friday, June 29. So please check your calendars now and with your training staff or lead drivers responsible for training new drivers in proper lift operation and passenger securement. Remember, if your trainer was certified more than three years ago it is time to have them recertified.

For more information, contact: Teresa Collins, Operations Manager, North Iowa Area Council of Governments, 525 6th Street S.W., Mason City IA 50401-5058, Phone: (641) 423-0491 ext.22, FAX: (641) 423-1637, e-mail: [tcollins@niacog.org](mailto:tcollins@niacog.org)



## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

I would like to begin by congratulating all our newly elected officials and welcoming several new people to the NIACOG Board of Directors. Representation of our member governments is reflected in the Board of Directors, which is the overall decision and policy making body. Whether you are new to the Board of Directors or simply new to your position, welcome. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to give me a call.

I would like to bring to everyone's attention the increase in NIACOG's membership dues as reported on the front page of this newsletter. The chief elected official from each member government was mailed a letter in December telling of the approved increase in our membership dues and asking that adequate funds be budgeted for the 7¢ per capita increase. I am taking this opportunity again to stress the importance of this increase and explain that without sufficient local matching funds, the agency would be jeopardizing our eligibility for key state and federal funding sources that fund two staff planning positions. I want to let our membership know that the NIACOG Board of Directors does not take membership dues' increases lightly, but after much consideration, unanimously voted in support of the increase because of the detrimental effects that would occur should the agency not meet its match requirements.

It is our mission to promote intergovernmental cooperation and strengthening local units of government by working collectively through the Council of Governments. I'm confident you will continue to find value in our services and hopeful that you remain a committed partner to growing our region and improving efficiencies in government, including our own.

## Land and Water Conservation Fund

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 of 50 percent for outdoor recreation area development and acquisition. Iowa's cities and counties are eligible to participate. Competition for LWCF funds is intense, but this program provides an excellent 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. The City of Garner received a \$32,478 grant for the Garner Municipal Aquatic Center in 2006. Applications for the 2007 grant cycle are due by March 15, 2007. Contact the NIACOG office for more information.

## Housing Fund Activity

2006 was another busy year for the NIACOG staff regarding housing assistance programs funded through the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED) Housing Fund.

Five Housing fund programs were successfully completed in the NIACOG Region in 2006. These were owner-occupied housing rehabilitation programs in Britt, Forest City, Kensett, Lake Mills, and Manly. Five other owner-occupied housing rehabilitation programs remained in progress at the start of the New Year. These are in the Cities of Buffalo Center, Charles City, Rake, Stacyville, and Swea City. All five of these communities are in the final phases of their respective programs, and will all be closing out this year.

In addition to administering existing Housing Fund grant programs, NIACOG staff also stayed busy in 2006 assisting with the submittal of new Housing Fund grant applications in the Region. Six applications were submitted to the IDED in November. The Cities of Sheffield, Thompson and Whittemore are all requesting funds in the amount of \$278,000 to rehabilitate 8 single family owner-occupied homes in their respective communities. The City of Forest City is requesting funds in the amount of \$207,000 to rehabilitate six homes. The City of Lake Mills is requesting \$199,975 to fund a Home ownership Assistance Program for 5 first time home buyers in the community (to include rehabilitation in support of home ownership). Also Common Ground Duplexes, LLC., submitted a Housing Fund Grant application in the amount of \$500,000 to construct ten new rental units in St Ansgar. Housing Fund awards will be announced by IDED early next month.

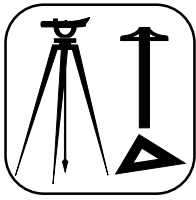
For other communities in the NIACOG region, please contact the NIACOG staff if you are interested in applying for Housing Fund assistance this year, or if you would like to learn more about IDED's Housing Fund in general. It is never too early to begin the grant application planning process.

The IDED Housing Fund provides funding from the U.S. Department of HUD (either CDBG or HOME funds) in order to expand or retain the supply of decent and affordable housing for low-income Iowans. Only local governments (cities, counties) are eligible to receive CDBG funds. However, eligible HOME recipients include for-profit entities and nonprofit organization in addition to local governments. Eligible activities include owner-occupied housing rehabilitation, rental housing rehabilitation and rental new construction (including transitional housing), tenant-based rental assistance, and home ownership assistance.

## Smaller Councils for Communities Under 500 Population

The 2003 Legislature passed Senate File 230, which makes it easier for a small community to reduce the size of its council from five to three members. This option is available to any City under 500 population. The change may be made by the current City Council, but citizens have the right to petition for an election. However, there are legal requirements that a public hearing be held prior to June 1<sup>st</sup> of a regular city election year and at least ten days notice must be given for the hearing. The legal proceedings can be found in the Code of Iowa, Chapter 372.4

## Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning Program



For the past decade, the Visioning Program has provided opportunities for Iowa communities with populations of fewer than 10,000 to access professional landscape planning and design assistance. Funds administered by the Iowa DOT are used for the program, which focuses on transportation-related community enhancements.

The program is carried out by the Iowa State University Department of Landscape Architecture, Trees Forever, private-sector landscape architects, and a volunteer community steering committee. Communities that participate in the program receive a conceptual landscape plan that graphically illustrates the vision of community leaders and volunteers, as well as assistance in developing strategies to implement the plan.

The Cities of Manly and Marble Rock, have been selected to participate in the 2007 Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning Program. Only twelve communities were selected statewide for the program. In 2006, the communities of Algona and Northwood took part in the Visioning Program and are featured in the 2006 Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning Program annual report. Participants from Algona and Northwood are listed in the report, providing other communities, as well as members of your organization, with valuable sources of information.

Copies of the 2006 Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning Program Annual Report and the 10th Anniversary Brochure are available to interested communities at the NIACOG office.

## Workshop Schedule for 2007 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG)

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) is a competitive grant opportunity for local fire departments and emergency medical services (EMS) organizations not affiliated with a hospital. The AFG funds activities such as purchasing firefighting equipment, personal protective equipment, training, firefighting and EMS vehicles, as well as firefighter/first responder safety projects.

Each year the AFG regional staff conducts hundreds of workshops nationwide to provide up to date grant information to applicants. On Thursday, January 25, 2007 the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFG) will begin posting the FY 2007 AFG workshop schedule on its website: [www.firegrantsupport.com](http://www.firegrantsupport.com). The workshops are scheduled and conducted by AFG regional representatives and offer current program information for any fire and/or EMS organization that wishes to submit a 2007 AFG application.

There is no admittance charge to any AFG workshop. The schedule provides important information about the conduct of the workshops, including points of contact. If you are unable to attend a workshop offered in your area, the program office will be providing an electronic copy of the PowerPoint presentation used at the workshops on the AFG website. In addition, by mid-February, the applicant tutorial, the FY 2007 AFG Program Guidance, and a list of Frequently Asked Questions will be available on the website. Potential applicants are also encouraged to utilize the AFG help desk at 1-866-274-0960 and at [FIREGRANTS@DHS.GOV](mailto:FIREGRANTS@DHS.GOV).

If you would like NIACOG staff to assist your community with a funding application, please contact the NIACOG office at 641-423-0491.

## Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)



NIACOG staff recently submitted Community Development Block Grant, Water and Sewer Fund applications for the cities of Carpenter, Scarville, Lake Mills, Nora Springs and Kanawha. A community Facilities and Services Fund application was submitted by Cerro Gordo County on behalf of Comprehensive Systems, Inc. Below are summaries of the applications.

**City of Carpenter** - The City of Carpenter requested \$130,000 for the construction and installation of a sanitary sewer collection and treatment system with a total project cost of \$975,000. The \$130,000 request will be matched with \$345,000 in USDA grant and loan funds as well as a \$500,000 Iowa Watershed Review Board grant awarded to the City in the Summer of 2006.

**City of Scarville** - The City of Scarville requested \$97,000 for the construction and installation of a municipal water system with a total project cost of \$460,800. This is part of a larger project of Xenia Rural Water which is proposing to build a water treatment plant to serve the Worth and Winnebago county areas. The overall project cost for the treatment plant and distribution system is estimated at nearly \$2.5 million dollars.

**City of Lake Mills** - The City of Lake Mills requested \$500,000 for the construction and installation of a water treatment system and water main replacement with a total project cost of over \$1.4 million dollars. The project will provide treated water to the community and create redundancy in the system in the event of a failure of the other treatment system.

**City of Nora Springs** - The City of Nora Springs requested \$500,000 for the construction and installation of a water treatment system and water main replacement with a total project cost of over \$1.1 million dollars. The existing treatment system has experienced corrosion which will lead to failure of the system.

**City of Kanawha** - The City of Kanawha requested \$140,000 for the replacement of 2" and 4" water main with 6" and 8" water main to be able to provide enough pressure to support the fire sprinkler system in the Kanawha Home, a senior living/nursing home facility with a total project cost of \$240,000. Without the new watermain the facility will not be able to provide fire suppression as mandated by the state Fire Marshall's office.

**Cerro Gordo County/Comprehensive Systems, Inc.** - Cerro Gordo County requested \$500,000 on behalf of Comprehensive Systems, Inc., to be able to purchase and renovate the facility currently utilized by Comprehensive Systems, Inc., with a total project cost of nearly \$1.4 million dollars. Comprehensive Systems, Inc. is currently leasing a portion of the facility and has invested a substantial amount of money to improve the facility for staff and clients. This project will allow Comprehensive Systems, Inc. to be able to utilize the whole facility and expand client services and activities.



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## NIACOG Calendar of Events

### FEBRUARY

- 2- Top of Iowa Tourism - NIACOG Office, 12:00 noon
- 7- NoRISC Safety Refresher @ NIACOG 8:30 - 3:00
- 12- NIACOG Board of Directors @ Bennigan's, Clear Lake, 6:00 dinner, 7:00 meeting

### MARCH

- 12- NIACOG Board of Directors @ Bennigan's, Clear Lake, 6:00 dinner, 7:00 meeting
- 16- City Clerk Association Mtg. @ NIACOG Training room, 9:30 a.m.

## Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program Update



The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program (PDM) provides funding to counties and communities for hazard mitigation planning and projects. This federally competitive grant program is administered state wide by the Iowa Homeland Security & Emergency Management (HLSEM)

office. Eligible projects include voluntary acquisition and demolition of flood-prone structures, elevation of flood-prone structures, minor structural hazard control such as replace or repair storm water drainage systems, localized flood control such as enlarge existing culverts, construction of tornado shelters and safe rooms. NIACOG provided assistance to eleven member communities during the 2007 PDM grant cycle, including eight planning and three project grant applications. Award notification is still pending on the 2007 applications.

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