

What's Happening

For Community Leaders

March/April 2019

MAPA communities face challenges after historic floods

Nebraska and Iowa face unprecedented challenges as they recover from the historic 2019 floods. Together the states sustained approximately \$3 billion in damage and are doing all they can to help residents recover. The Metropolitan Area Planning Agency is also ready to offer its expertise with many of the administrative requirements that come with federal funds.

“MAPA can help communities in the region. We’re still waiting to see how everything will work and what funding will come through. The first step is for Congress to appropriate additional money,” said Greg Youell, MAPA Executive Director.

In Nebraska, at the height of the flood, there were 150 miles of roads closed in Douglas, Sarpy, Cass, Washington, and Dodge Counties. The Nebraska Department of Transportation estimates it will cost approximately \$20 million to fix all the damage just in those counties. The Iowa Department of Transportation estimates damage in the region will hit \$90 million.



A MAPA drone photo of Waterloo, Nebraska in March 2019 after the Elkhorn River flooded the area.

Many communities in Nebraska and Iowa such as Bellevue, Fremont, Waterloo, Plattsmouth, Valley, Glenwood, Pacific Junction, Missouri Valley, and Hamburg also experienced significant infrastructure damage.

“The big thing for these communities is to make sure their residents are talking to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and all the relevant state agencies,” said Youell.

Youell said during a disaster so many groups arrive in town it can be challenging for residents to determine if they are talking to the correct organizations. “We found that out speaking with our colleagues in Eastern Iowa. They stressed how important it is to start with FEMA. That really needs to be your first point of contact.”

Here are a few additional tips:

- Document everything
- How many people were without service?
- What happened to your wastewater plant, how many residents were impacted?
 - How many households were impacted?
- How many streets were underwater?
 - Was there a way out of the city?
- How many homes and businesses were damaged?
 - How many can be repaired?
 - How many have to be demolished?
- Make “before” and “after” maps
- Keep track of volunteer hours

MAPA can help communities with a variety of projects, such as improvements to waste water plants, handling property buyouts and aerial mapping (see article on page 2 about MAPA’s drone services). MAPA also has a complete list of resources on www.mapacog.org with links to all agencies offering assistance and ways to give back.

“This was an epic event and it’s going to take some time to secure funding. But once a community gets the money, we’re here, ready and willing to help,” said Youell.

For more information contact Don Gross, Community and Economic Development Manager, dgross@mapacog.org or 402-444-6866 extension 230.

MAPA introduces drone photography as an agency service

There's something about seeing an area from the air that provides a new perspective on a place people think they know. MAPA discovered that first-hand when MAPA's FAA-certified drone pilot, Owen Stuckey, flew over the Missouri, Elkhorn and Platte Rivers at the height of the 2019 flooding.

Tens of thousands of people watched his videos on MAPA's Facebook page in March.



"I feel like it offers people a very current view of what's happening right now," said Stuckey.

He's been taking videos and photos with his drone since 2016 and now his services are available for all MAPA members. During the past few months, Stuckey shot video of the Bike Omaha Network, and took photos for Metro's new ORBT route.

Stuckey, who uses a Mavik 2 Pro drone with a camera attached to it, says that's just a small sampling of what he can do for clients. He can also create 3D models, provide footage of community events and orthomosaic mapping, which is a series of photos superimposed over a map of a small, focused area.

"There are so many uses for a drone in the work MAPA does. I can take photos of an area a city wants to rezone or add workforce housing. I can fly over a new bridge or highway, I can even show how lane changes on a road affect traffic flow. Really the possibilities are endless," said Stuckey.

For more information about MAPA's drone services contact Owen Stuckey at ostuckey@mapacog.org or 402-444-6866 extension 236.

Heartland 2050 Summit will focus on transit in a new light

Join MAPA for the Heartland 2050 Summit, "Connecting People to Life: Transit in a New Light," May 8, 2019 at the Omaha Hilton located at 1001 Cass Street in downtown Omaha. Katharine Eagan Kelleman, CEO of the Port Authority of Allegheny County, Pittsburgh's public transit agency, is the keynote speaker.

An innovative, out-of-the-box thinker and problem-solver, Ms. Kelleman is leading the way in creative transit solutions.

Ms. Kelleman is a nationally-known transit expert, who has worked in Dallas, Baltimore and Tampa before landing at her current job in Pittsburgh. She's left her mark on every city, finding ways to improve each system, close the gap in access and opportunity and open the doors to success for all.

There's still time to sign up for the summit and special spotlight sessions. Follow the link to get tickets: tinyurl.com/H2050summit19.

A promotional graphic for the Heartland 2050 Summit. It features a dark background with a teal vertical line on the left and an orange horizontal line at the top. The text "Heartland 2050" is in white, with a small logo. Next to it is the word "gap" in a stylized font with an arrow pointing left. Below this, "Join Us" is written in large white letters. Underneath, "Heartland 2050 Summit" is in orange. Then, the date "5-8-19" is shown with each number in a colored circle (orange, teal, green, green). At the bottom, the tagline "Connecting People to Life: Transit in a New Light" is in white.

Council Bluffs Public Works Director retires

Never underestimate the power of a simple thank you note. After more than three decades with the Council Bluffs Public Works Department, Director Greg Reeder, who retired in mid-April, says those small things still move him. "There's nothing better than fixing a really minor issue and getting a thank you note for doing it. That makes it all worth it," said Reeder. In his 32 years with the City of Council Bluffs, Reeder spent 14 years as Director of Public Works. Reeder said one of his more memorable moments was managing the 2011 flood. "It was a once-in-a-lifetime event."

He's also proud of his work on the City's sewer separation project and the reconstruction of Interstate 80. "I first met with MAPA in 1995 to start discussing the interstate," said Reeder. "Now 24 years later the project is in its final stages." The

way Reeder's department responded the flooding and other projects over the course of his career earned him national recognition. In 2015, he was named one of the Top Ten Public Works Leaders by the American Public Works Association.

Reeder said one of the frustrations of running Public Works is the department cannot do everything, even with a staff of 120. "We've accomplished so much, but there is nothing I did by myself, it was a total team effort," Reeder said.

Reeder's retirement plans include several home projects, spending time with his children and grandchildren, traveling and riding his motorcycle.



NARC June Annual Conference in Omaha

Elected officials nationwide will descend on Omaha when MAPA hosts the National Association of Regional Council's (NARC) 53rd Annual Conference and Exhibition. It's Sunday, June 9 through Wednesday, June 12, 2019 at the Omaha Marriott Downtown at the Capitol District.

Representatives of Councils of Government and Metropolitan Planning Organizations will come together to share best practices, attend informational sessions and mobile workshops, participate in hands-on training and technical service programs.



The Peter Kiewit Foundation is offering a limited amount of scholarships for Councils of Governments, Economic Development Districts and those who work in planning organizations in Nebraska or in Western Iowa within 100 miles of Omaha.

For more information, contact Christina Brownell at cbrownell@mapacog.org or 402-444-6866 extension 217.

Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/NARCOMaha2019>.

NARC

Building Regional Communities

CALENDAR

May 2019

- May 8th – Heartland 2050 Summit
Hilton Omaha
8 a.m. - 2 p.m.
RPA-18
11 a.m.
- May 15th – Coordinated Transit
10:30 a.m.
- May 17th – Bike to Work Day
- May 22nd – Finance Committee
8:30 a.m.
- May 24th – Transportation
10 a.m.
- May 27th – Memorial Day
MAPA Offices Closed
- May 30th – MAPA Board of Directors
1:30 p.m.

June 2019

- June 7th – Heartland 2050 Regional
Planning Advisory Committee
10 a.m.
- June 9th – NARC 53rd Annual Conference
June 12th Omaha, NE
- June 12th – RPA-18
11 a.m.
- June 19th – Finance Committee
8:30 a.m.
Coordinated Transit
10:30 a.m.
- June 20th – Council of Officials
- June 21st – Transportation
10 a.m.
- June 27th – MAPA Board of Directors
1:30 p.m.

MAPA adds two additional staff members in February 2019

MAPA welcomed two staff members in February 2019.

Sheena Van Ornum is an intern for MAPA's Community and Economic Development department.

Sheena has a bachelor's degree from University of Nebraska Omaha in International Studies. She's currently pursuing a graduate certificate in Public Management from UNO. Sheena served four years in the United States Air Force and was a National Security Agency cryptologic language analyst.

She and her husband live in Bellevue and have five children ranging in age from 6 to 17.

Jim Boerner is MAPA's new Transportation Planner.

He served in the United States Navy for 20 years. Jim is originally from North Platte, Nebraska. He graduated from the University of Nebraska Omaha with a degree in Civil Engineering. Jim is working on the region's congestion management process.

He and his wife have two boys and live in Bellevue. He is training to run the half marathon in Lincoln this spring. During the past five years, Jim has completed multiple half marathons.



JIM BOERNER
Transportation Planner



SHEENA VAN ORNUM
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