

What's Happening

For Community Leaders

May/June 2019

Historic flooding hits home for two MAPA Board members

The historic flooding the MAPA region has experienced since March really hit home for MAPA board members Carol Vinton and Clare Duda. Both are impacted directly. "We've never been through anything like this before. We are just now seeing a tiny light at the end of the tunnel," said Carol Vinton, Mills County Supervisor and MAPA Board of Directors Vice-Chair.

Vinton and her husband farm a couple thousand acres near the Missouri River. Clare Duda, a Douglas County Commissioner and MAPA Council of Officials President, farms on land along the Missouri River just north of Omaha.

The trouble started last fall for Duda and Vinton. "We never got out last year's crop," said Duda. "The Missouri River started rising in September. I'm now looking at a second year with no income. That's tough for any business to endure."



A MAPA drone photo of Pacific Junction, Iowa, in June 2019 after heavy rain and historic flooding.

Vinton and her husband, couldn't get into their fields until mid-January. "We got about half of it (the crop) out, but it was really poor quality. We were hoping to get a jump on it this spring, but Mother Nature had other ideas," said Vinton.

An emergency manager caught the disaster unfolding. Watch the video here: <http://bit.ly/MillsCo-EMA>.



CLARE DUDA

MAPA Council of Officials
President



CAROL VINTON

MAPA Board of Directors
Vice-Chair

Commissioner Duda farms in a flood plain. "It's going to flood. It has in '52, '93, '97 and 2011. But we've never seen anything like this and this land has been in my family for three generations," said Duda.

The severity of the flooding is showing up in disaster payments. "We've paid out \$47 million in disaster aid to people across Nebraska and Iowa and we're going to keep paying out more money," said Paul Taylor, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 7 Administrator.

Taylor addressed MAPA's Council of Officials at its meeting June 20. "It's a business where you never make everyone whole or happy, but I think overall we've done a good job in disaster response in Nebraska and Iowa."

Mills County formed a housing group and is working with FEMA and MAPA's Community and Economic Development Department to create a plan for buyouts.

Even though the 2019 floods have affected their livelihoods Duda and Vinton are trying to stay positive.

"This kind of thing can really test your patience, but there are so many people who are so much worse off than us. We'll get through this. We've done it before and we'll do it again," said Duda.

Vinton echoed those sentiments, "I know people will come back and Mills County will be better for this."

MAPA hosts 53rd Annual NARC Conference in Omaha

For the first time in 18 years, MAPA hosted the summer National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) Conference June 9-12 at the Omaha Marriott Downtown at the Capitol District.

The NARC Conference brings together regional planning organizations from across the country to network, learn from industry experts and share best practices.

In addition to a full program of exciting and interesting sessions, MAPA staff hosted morning runs for conference attendees with tours of neighborhoods near Downtown Omaha; a trolley tour of neighborhoods in Omaha and Council Bluffs rebounding through redevelopment efforts; a biking history tour showcasing neighborhoods near Downtown and Midtown Omaha; and a behind-

the-scenes tour of TD Ameritrade Park during final preparations for the College World Series.

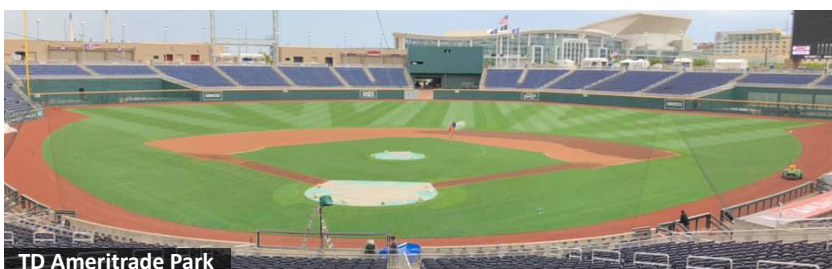
Thanks again to all of our sponsors and to all who traveled to the Omaha-Council Bluffs region to attend!



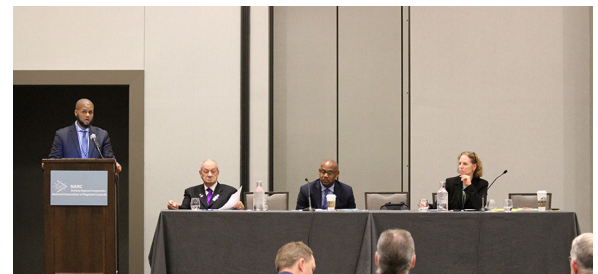
MAPA Executive Director Greg Youell and NARC President Geof Benson welcome conference attendees at the opening reception of the NARC Conference at the Holland Performing Arts Center - Skyview Terrace.



Conference attendees receive a behind-the-scenes tour of TD Ameritrade Park from MECA employee Tex Rutter as staff prepares for the Major League Baseball game between the Detroit Tigers and Kansas City Royals on June 13.



TD Ameritrade Park



James Garland (far left) with the U.S. Federal Highway Administration speaks on federal transportation issues. L to R: Fred Strong, Egan Smith and Susanna Hughes-Reck.



A local biking enthusiast and planner along with MAPA staff led conference attendees on a biking history tour of neighborhoods around Downtown and Midtown Omaha.

Board of Directors approves Transportation Improvement Program

MAPA's Board of Directors approved the FY2020-FY2025 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) at its meeting June 27.

Every year MAPA develops the TIP in cooperation with state and local governments and public transit operators. The document lists all transportation

projects programmed for four fiscal years which are receiving federal funds and are significant to the region.

The TIP includes projects for roadways, trails and public transit projects in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area.

Heartland 2050 Summit links transit's connection to life

"The loss of human dignity can't be a precondition for using public transportation."

That was the message from Katharine Eagan Kelleman, CEO of the Port Authority of Allegheny County, Pittsburgh's public transit agency, and keynote speaker at the Heartland 2050 Summit, "Connecting People to Life: Transit in a New Light," hosted by MAPA on May 8.

"It's all about transportation. If you can't get to everything in your community, what's the point?" said Kelleman.

Kelleman has lived and worked all over the United States and now calls Pittsburgh home. She and about half the people who work in downtown Pittsburgh, take the train to work every day.

But Kelleman admitted there's a big difference between commuters like herself and the Head Start mom. "Any of us who ignores that 60-times a week consumer versus the five times a week rider isn't doing their job," said Kelleman.

Conference attendees told Kelleman by 2050 they want a region that is "connected," "creative," "accessible," and "inclusive."

"I feel like you have a great foundation. You have people who care, but you don't feel like you have a lot of money. You have to get creative and creativity in bureaucracy is not something we are really good at," said Kelleman.



Katharine Eagan Kelleman, CEO of the Port Authority of Allegheny County, spoke about transportation and how she has used creative solutions at different transit authorities.

That's exactly what Kelleman did while in Tampa. Some of her creative solutions included public-private partnerships, ride-sharing and introducing the first autonomous transit vehicle in North America.

"Do the cool things but don't forget about the Head Start mom. We are running a service with taxpayer dollars and if everyone can't use it, there's a problem. I guarantee, if you make it better for the guy in the tie, everyone is going to come and want to use that service," said Kelleman.

Heartland 2050 is a coordinated planning effort for the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area. It includes Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington Counties in Nebraska; Pottawattamie and Mills Counties in Iowa.



Katharine Eagan Kelleman (far right) led a panel to highlight transportation pressure points in the metro. L to R: Keith Station, Abbie Kretz, Karen Gibler and Jaymes Sime.

CALENDAR

July 2019

- July 4th – Independence Day
MAPA Offices Closed
- July 10th – RPA-18
11 a.m.
- July 12th – NACo Annual Conference
July 15th Las Vegas, NV
- July 17th – Finance Committee
8:30 a.m.
Coordinated Transit
10:30 a.m.
- July 19th – Transportation
10 a.m.
- July 25th – MAPA Board of Directors
1:30 p.m.

August 2019

- Aug. 2nd – Heartland 2050 Regional
Planning Advisory Committee
10 a.m.
- Aug. 7th – RPA-18
11 a.m.
- Aug. 14th – Coordinated Transit
10:30 a.m.
- Aug. 21st – Finance Committee
8:30 a.m.
ISAC Annual Conference
Des Moines, IA
Aug. 21-23
- Aug. 23rd – Transportation
10 a.m.
- Aug. 29th – MAPA Board of Directors
1:30 p.m.

MAPA adds new staff member and intern in May and June

MAPA welcomed a staff member and an intern in May and June.

Ryan Ossell is the agency's new Community Development Assistant Planner.

He graduated in May 2019 from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a Master's Degree in Community and Regional Planning. Ryan is originally from Minnesota.

His current projects include helping Glenwood, Iowa, develop a trail system and working with Waterloo and Valley, Nebraska, on an owner-occupied housing rehabilitation program.

Tom Ryan is MAPA's summer transportation intern.

Tom is pursuing a degree in civil engineering at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, studying at the Peter Kiewit Institute, and will graduate in May 2020. Tom said he hopes working at MAPA this summer will help him decide whether he wants to pursue a career in planning or engineering.

He is helping MAPA's Transportation Department evaluate and rate pavement for smaller cities in the region.



RYAN OSSELL
Community Development
Planner



TOM RYAN
Transportation Intern

Metropolitan Area Planning Agency
2222 Cuming St., Omaha, NE 68102-4328
P: 402.444.6866 F: 402.951.6517
Email: mapa@mapacog.org
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