

What's Happening

For Community Leaders

July/August 2019

Business owner develops workforce from neighborhood

"We believe in urban development and creating jobs in the city we love." That's the philosophy which guided the President and CEO of North End Teleservices, Carmen Tapio, and her partners to start her company four years ago. Now her vision is paying off in ways she never imagined.



CARMEN TAPIO

North End Teleservices
President and CEO

Located just north of Downtown, North End Teleservices is a global omni-channel contact

center, handling phone calls, emails, chat and SMS services for clients worldwide. It was founded in partnership with the Omaha Economic Development Corporation and last October Tapio bought out her investors.

"We were very intentional about locating this business where we did," said Tapio, who described her company as being located at the gateway to 24th Street. "The unemployment rate is still quite high in this area, it's also on a bus route. To me, the single biggest barrier to employment, particularly in this region, is transportation."

24th Street is currently part of the 24th Street Corridor Forever North housing and transportation study. This study is funded with a Heartland 2050 mini-grant that the City of Omaha received through MAPA. Tapio serves as a member of the Stakeholder Committee for MAPA's Transit Return on Investment study, which focuses on making the business case for expanded transit in the metro. She is determined to connect people who want to work with a job and remove those barriers.

"90% of our employees live within two miles of work and are just minutes from home. That's huge, especially if you have a family or kids. It makes everything so much easier. Couple that with our culture and you get

greater dedication, lower turnover and huge retention. This location has really paid off in putting qualified, underutilized labor to work," Tapio said.

When Tapio started North End Teleservices, most of her employees didn't have cars so they created carpools and started ride sharing, but now that's changed. "I'm proud this job helped them reach that basic goal of getting a car. Transportation is something most of us take for granted. But without some sort of reliable transportation, it's almost impossible to function in our society."

Tapio empowers her employees in more ways than just helping them get to and from work. "I started at First Data when I was just 18 years old and now I own my own company. I want people to see there are all sorts of career paths. You can go anywhere you want."

For some, that means returning to northeast Omaha. "We held a job fair and had 62 well-qualified applicants in just two hours. They were highly-skilled people who want to work in the community in which they live," said Tapio.

North End Teleservices remains focused on creating new jobs in northeast. Tapio also has plans to expand into South Omaha.

For this CEO, it goes back to creating a thriving and equitable community through inclusivity.

"My mission is to create jobs, change lives and make northeast Omaha part of the overall success of Omaha. It's like that old saying, "A rising tide lifts all boats." We are part of that tide, making Omaha one of the best places in the country to call home."



MAPA Council of Officials approves Cass County in region

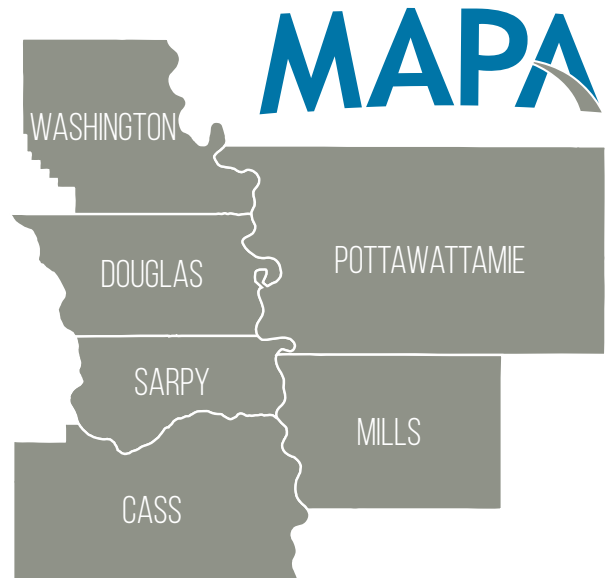
It's official. Cass County is now part of the MAPA region.

"Cass County is pleased to become a member of MAPA," said Janet McCartney, Cass County Commissioner. "We have a total of 15 communities that are cities, towns and villages.

MAPA's Council of Officials voted to approve the change on July 25, the last step in a lengthy process to have MAPA's boundaries changed to include Cass County.

County officials first requested to join MAPA in late 2016. Data show the County's population is oriented increasingly toward the Omaha metro area. Data from MAPA show approximately 47.3% of the population commutes to Douglas and Sarpy Counties for work. The new Highway 75 expressway increases the County's connection to the metro area along with its proximity to Offutt Air Force Base and growing Sarpy County. Cass County is also part of the Greater Omaha Chamber's Economic Development Partnership.

The move required action by the Nebraska Legislature in order to change the boundaries of MAPA's Economic Development District. State senators passed the bill in May 2019 and Governor Ricketts signed it into law.



"Joining MAPA will give our entire communities and the County services that will help our areas to work on projects that, without MAPA, will most likely take longer to get accomplished," McCartney said.

Previously, Cass County was a member of the South East Nebraska Development District (SEND).

"We are looking forward to attending the meetings and learning more about what MAPA can assist with or provide to our County and our citizens," McCartney said.

Malvern uses second 5-2-1-0 grant to benefit community children

Malvern, Iowa residents are getting healthier thanks to another 5-2-1-0 grant from the Iowa Department of Health and a little help from MAPA.

This year Malvern received \$10,000 on top of \$18,000 in 2018 for a childhood obesity prevention program. MAPA's Community and Economic Development team helps implement it.

5-2-1-0 focuses on four main goals:

- **5** or more servings of fruits and vegetables;
- **2** hours or less of screen time (television, computer, video games, phones, etc.);
- **1** hour or more of physical activity; and
- **0** sugar-sweetened beverages.

Malvern used the 2018 grant to rent, equip and open the Liberty Memorial Building. The historic building has a full gym which saw limited usage prior to the 5-2-1-0 grant. Since opening the gym, adult pickleball

and volleyball leagues have started also.

This year's grant allowed Malvern to rent the Liberty Memorial Building to give children additional access to the gym and expanded the community gardens in downtown.

In 2020, the town will get \$5,000 from the state of Iowa. MAPA will work with the community to decide how to use the money for the program.



MAPA launches “A Moment with MAPA” podcast

MAPA is now producing a podcast, “A Moment with MAPA.” The podcast started as a way to share interesting and informative insights about the region, that get MAPA employees excited about the work they’re doing.

“I discovered since coming to MAPA that I can’t visit a city and enjoy it like a tourist and enjoy the sights like I used to. Now I look at every nook and cranny and think about how all this came together. There are reasons why our cities developed the way they did and I want to share that with people

outside of MAPA,” said Karna Loewenstein, Heartland 2050 coordinator and host of the first three podcasts.

So far, the podcasts have covered topics such as why Omaha developed the way it did and how it evolved as the largest city in the region instead of Council Bluffs or Bellevue. Other podcast topics include the high cost of owning a car and an explanation of nodes and corridors.

“A Moment with MAPA” is available on most podcast platforms including Spotify.

Metro Transit installs CNG fuel pumps

Metro Transit is getting greener. In May 2019, fuel pumps for compressed natural gas (CNG) were installed in a fueling lane for buses and vans.

Metro is partnering with Creighton University and the Metropolitan Utilities District (MUD) to install a public fueling station, which has a dedicated extension to Metro’s offices for the newly installed pumps.

In addition to vehicles fueled by clean diesel, regular diesel and gas, Metro now has 14 buses and nine vans powered by CNG. The introduction of CNG means a more sustainable fuel option, which can help reduce emissions and improve fuel efficiency. By replacing 14 diesel buses with CNG-powered models, Metro will reduce its emissions by 144,893 pounds

of nitrous oxide, 455 pounds of atmospheric particulate matter, and 1,767 tons of carbon dioxide every year.

The CNG pumps were also installed in anticipation of ORBT, Omaha’s first bus rapid transit line. ORBT will run along Dodge and Douglas Streets with 10 articulated, 60-foot buses, fueled by CNG.

Metro plans to continue increasing the amount of sustainably fueled vehicles to help improve air quality and to offer a more environmentally friendly mode of transportation in Omaha.



CALENDAR

September 2019

- Sept. 2nd – Labor Day
MAPA Offices Closed
- Sept. 11th – RPA-18
11 a.m.
- Sept. 18th – League of Nebraska
Sept. 20th Municipalities Annual
Conference
- Sept. 18th – Finance Committee
8:30 a.m.
Coordinated Transit
10:30 a.m.
- Sept. 20th – Transportation
10 a.m.
- Sept. 25th – Iowa League of Cities Annual
Sept. 27th Conference (Dubuque, Iowa)
- Sept. 26th – MAPA Board of Directors
1:30 p.m.

October 2019

- Oct. 4th – Heartland 2050 Regional
Planning Advisory Committee
10 a.m.
- Oct. 9th – RPA-18
11 a.m.
MAPA Annual Meeting
Blair Marina
6 p.m.
- Oct. 14th – Columbus Day
MAPA Offices Closed
- Oct. 16th – Coordinated Transit
10:30 a.m.
- Oct. 19th – NADO Annual Training
Conference (Reno, Nevada)
- Oct. 23rd – Finance Committee
8:30 a.m.
- Oct. 25th – Transportation
10 a.m.
- Oct. 31st – MAPA Board of Directors
1:30 p.m.

New Complete Count intern joins MAPA to help with Census

Ariana Wesley-Powell started her internship at MAPA in June and quickly jumped into two roles. She's currently the Complete Count (2020 Census) and the Heartland 2050 intern.

Ariana is an English major studying creative nonfiction at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She's a fifth-year senior and plans to graduate in May 2020.

An Omaha native, who graduated from Mercy High School, Ariana says she was looking for an internship that allowed her to interact with the community and get to know even more people in the city.

In her spare time, Ariana is president of Sigma Tau Delta, the English Honor Society at UNO. She also loves to listen to K-pop and is working on her TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) certification to teach in Asia.



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