

# What's Happening

*For Community Leaders*

Winter 2020

## Retiring Commissioner receives MAPA Award of Merit

In 1991, Clare Duda was busy farming with his parents in Douglas County and serving as chief of the Ponca Hills Volunteer Fire Department, when an opportunity for public service came his way through fellow farmer, Howard Buffett, the County Commissioner representing District 7 at the time.

“Howard Buffett, decided not to seek re-election and urged me to run for his seat,” said Duda. “After much homework, I jumped into the race, as one of nine candidates, and enjoyed the good fortune of getting elected to seven terms.”

Duda, who serves as Chair of the Douglas County Commissioners, a member of MAPA’s Board of Directors and as President of MAPA’s Council of Officials, will retire at the end of December, concluding his 28-year public service career. He lost the 2020 primary election to challenger Mike Friend. Duda has served on MAPA’s Board of Directors most of his tenure including seven terms as chair. As the county representative his duties also included attending monthly Finance Committee meetings which he did faithfully.

Reflecting on his time in office, Duda said he has had the satisfaction of many accomplishments in his 28-year political foray. “Selling the AK-Sar-Ben racetrack to First Data Resources and UNO was a real highlight. I have also had the opportunity to write the countywide library agreement 25 years ago that is still in effect. I helped merge Omaha and Douglas County’s 911 centers, and am still involved with the Douglas County Courthouse expansion.”

Another area of satisfaction for Duda is the County’s role as the caregiver of last resort. “Every resident should be proud of the Douglas County Health Center both for long-term care and the Community Mental Health Center. The services it provides are important support for our whole community,” said Duda.

Duda also created the Douglas County Health Center Foundation, which has raised more than \$2 million to enhance the lives of residents and staff. He and his wife, Gayle, still serve on the foundation’s board of trustees.

Though not holding public office may be an abrupt change after 28 years of service, Duda views it with optimism. “I am excited to be retiring. Gayle and I are still farming, now with the help of our son, James. We have a herd of a couple hundred goats that we enjoy,” said Duda. And the couple is making plans for life after public office. “When the weather cooperates, Gayle and I like to take motorcycle trips, and are dreaming of riding to Alaska this spring, when we will finally have enough time for the five-week trip.”

For his dedicated public service the past 28 years, MAPA awarded Duda with its highest honor, the Award of Merit, at its 2020 Council of Officials meeting. At its Dec. 10 Board of Directors meeting, MAPA passed a Resolution of Commendation recognizing Clare Duda’s service.

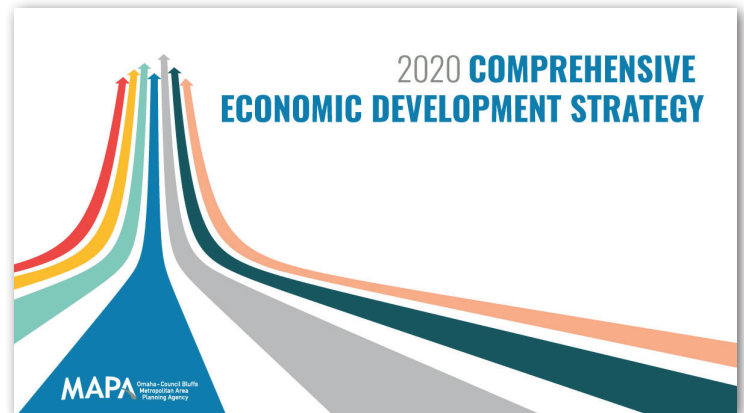
We thank Commissioner Duda for his dedicated service to Douglas County and MAPA. We will miss his sense of humor, his infectious laugh and we wish him the happiest of retirements!



# MAPA Board of Directors approves 2020 CEDS

MAPA's Board of Directors approved the 2020 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) at its Dec. 10 meeting.

The CEDS (full report: [mapacog.org/projects/ceds](http://mapacog.org/projects/ceds)) is a blueprint for economic resiliency in the six-county Omaha-Council Bluffs region, which is revised completely every five years. The CEDS planning process provides a coordinating mechanism for individuals, organizations, local governments, and private industry to engage in meaningful conversation about the state and direction of the regional economy.



## GEO mapping to help efforts to boost broadband access



MAPA is part of a statewide effort in Nebraska to boost broadband access.

MAPA is acquiring a two-year subscription to GEO crowdsource mapping, which will be available to residents in Washington, Douglas, Sarpy and Cass Counties in the form of a survey. MAPA also intends to offer the survey to the Iowa counties it serves: Pottawattamie and Mills.

The survey will pinpoint, down to the parcel level, the type and strength of internet service each resident is receiving. It will be available beginning in January. The mapping will identify each community's broadband needs and will serve as a blueprint for improving access and boosting economic development.

## Weeping Water receives CDBG award for planning work

Weeping Water, Nebraska, is receiving financial assistance for its planning efforts. The Nebraska Department of Economic Development awarded the City a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) up to \$36,075.

The grant will fund an update to the City's Comprehensive Plan. MAPA's Community and Economic Development staff assisted with the CDBG application. MAPA can assist your community with its economic development needs too.

Contact Don Gross, Community & Economic Development Manager, at [dgross@mapacog.org](mailto:dgross@mapacog.org) or 402-444-6866, ext. 3230.



# Economic Resilience toolkits being created for Iowa

MAPA joins Councils of Government across Iowa in developing economic resilience toolkits to assist communities and organizations in recovering from the financial impacts of the pandemic and other recent crises, such as the 2019 floods. The toolkits, which will be available in early 2021, will be based on four pillars for resilience: **Model, Money, Management and Marketing**. The funding for the toolkits comes from the CARES Act.

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## Call for Projects for FY2022 TIP funding cycle

### CALL FOR PROJECTS



**Deadline approaching!** MAPA is calling for projects for a variety of regional funding programs from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the FY2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding cycle. Access information about each funding category and the applications for them at: [bit.ly/FY22CallForProjects](https://bit.ly/FY22CallForProjects). Project applications should be submitted **no later than 4:30 pm on Friday, January 8, 2021**.

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## Community Relations Liaison joins MAPA staff

We welcome Laura Heilman to MAPA and the Communications and Outreach Team!

Laura, who began her employment with MAPA on Nov. 16, is the agency's Community Relations Liaison and Project Coordinator. Her work will focus on Heartland 2050, but will support all of MAPA's communications efforts.

Before joining MAPA's team, Laura worked as Grants Manager for Habitat for Humanity and as the Communications Director for the Omaha Land Bank. She also has several years of experience working as a Strategic Communications Coordinator for HDR.

Laura is active in the community. She serves on the Omaha Mayor's Fair Housing Advisory Committee and is a past member of the Greater Omaha Chamber's Young Professionals Council.

She has a Bachelor's degree in Art from California State University-Stanislaus.



# Joyful Wishes

from the MAPA Staff



GREG YUELL



CHRISTINA BROWNELL



TRAVIS HALM



RYAN OSSELE



GRANT ANDERSON



RAFAEL CORRALES



MICHAEL HELGERSON



BRENDA RAMIREZ



COURT BARBER



JOSH CORRIGAN



MICHAEL KEAYS



OWEN STUCKEY



LAURA HEILMAN



SUE CUTSFORTH



KARNA LOEWENSTEIN



MEGAN WALKER



NATASHA BARRETT



SARAH FIXMER



AMANDA MORALES



JODI WOOLERY



SHAWNNA SILVIUS



JIM BOERNER



DON GROSS

## CALENDAR

### January 2021

- Jan. 1st – New Year's Day  
*MAPA Offices closed*
- Jan. 6th – Nebraska Legislature Convenes
- Jan. 11th – Iowa Legislature Convenes
- Jan. 13th – RPA-18\*  
11:00 a.m.
- Jan. 18th – Martin Luther King Day  
*MAPA Offices closed*
- Jan. 20th – Finance Committee\*  
8:30 a.m.  
Coordinated Transit\*  
10:30 a.m.
- Jan. 22nd – Transportation Committee\*  
10:00 a.m.
- Jan. 28th – MAPA Board of Directors\*  
1:30 p.m.

### February 2021

- Feb. 2nd – Groundhog Day
- Feb. 5th – Regional Planning\*  
(Heartland 2050 RPAC)  
10:00 a.m.
- Feb. 7th – NARC Conference of  
*(Feb. 7-10)* Regions\*
- Feb. 10th – RPA-18\*  
11:00 a.m.
- Feb. 14th – Valentine's Day
- Feb. 15th – Presidents' Day  
*MAPA Offices closed*
- Feb. 17th – Ash Wednesday  
Finance Committee\*  
8:30 a.m.
- Feb. 19th – Transportation Committee  
10:00 a.m.
- Feb. 20th – NACo National Association of  
*(Feb. 20 - 24)* Counties Legislative Conference
- Feb. 25th – MAPA Board of Directors\*  
1:30 p.m.

\*meeting may be virtual