

MOVING FORWARD

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

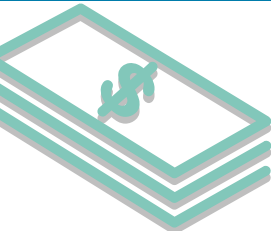
Heartland Robotics Cluster awarded \$25 million

[READ ARTICLE >>](#)



West Nishnabotna Watershed projects completed

[READ ARTICLE >>](#)



Connect Nebraska Broadband Initiative launched

[READ ARTICLE >>](#)



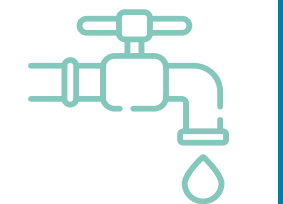
Carson & Macedonia DTR projects wrap up

[READ ARTICLE >>](#)



C.I.T.I.E.S. funding aids community infrastructure needs

[READ ARTICLE >>](#)



MAPA hires new C&O Manager

[READ ARTICLE >>](#)



Council of Officials meeting speaker to focus on civic pride

Growing up in a dying rust belt town where most residents were leaving made Jeff Siegler wonder what makes towns civically healthy and, ultimately, it led him to the world of urban planning and community revitalization.

"There were other communities that were healthier; that had a sense of community. It made me wonder what makes cities have community pride," said Siegler.

Siegler is the owner of Revitalize or Die, a civic pride consulting firm, and the keynote speaker for MAPA's Council of Officials Annual Meeting on Oct. 5 at Bella Terre Vineyard & Reception Hall near Glenwood, Iowa.

He works with towns and cities of all sizes to help them revitalize their communities.

He says the first step communities need to take to begin eliminating civic apathy and restoring civic pride is to acknowledge there is a problem.

"I find communities are hesitant to admit that something is going on," said Siegler.

"Cities behave like people. Cities with low self-esteem accept being treated in a way that they don't deserve."

Jeff Siegler

"It's a logical response to be apathetic to a town that has declined. Cities behave like people. Cities with low self-esteem accept being treated in a way that they don't deserve."

Siegler is quick to point out there is no silver bullet to rebuilding civic pride and revitalizing communities. Increasing jobs, drafting another comprehensive plan, or adding one specific employer will not replace civic apathy with civic pride by themselves.

continued on page 3

Heartland Robotics Cluster awarded \$25 million

Nebraska’s robotics industry will receive a boost. The U.S. Economic Development Administration announced recently the Heartland Robotics Cluster Coalition is one of 21 winners of the \$1 billion Build Back Better Regional Challenge.

The coalition will be awarded \$25 million in grants to accelerate Nebraska’s leadership in the agricultural industry through robotic technologies and advanced manufacturing automation.

As a finalist in the Build Back Better Regional Challenge, the coalition developed a collaborative plan to invest in makerspaces, education, workforce development and incubation technical assistance that would set Nebraska on a long-term path to continue as a leader in agriculture production but with greater labor productivity.

The Heartland Robotics Cluster Coalition is led by Invest Nebraska in partnership with several regional partners, including MAPA.

The Build Back Better Regional Challenge is funded by the American Rescue Plan Act.



Coordinated Transit Plan out for public comment

MAPA seeks public input on its Coordinated Transit Plan. The Coordinated Transit Plan is a guiding document for human service and transit providers in the Omaha-Council Bluffs region.

The **public comment period** runs **Aug. 26 through Sept. 26, 2022**. MAPA hosted a public meeting on Sept. 6 regarding the plan.

The Coordinated Transit Plan assesses:

- Service needs
- Current services
- Potential funding options

It is used to develop goals that communities want to achieve during the next five years and strategies for meeting those goals.

To view the Coordinated Transit Plan and complete a comment form, go to tinyurl.com/CoordTransitPlan.

Written comments may be submitted also via email to: mapa@mapacog.org or U.S. Mail: MAPA, 2222 Cuming St., Omaha, NE 68102.

Comments must be submitted by **4:30 p.m. on Sept. 26, 2022**.

West Nishnabotna Watershed projects completed

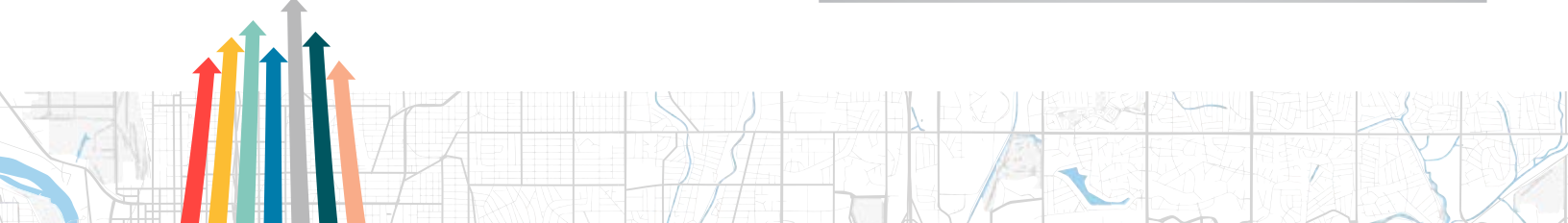
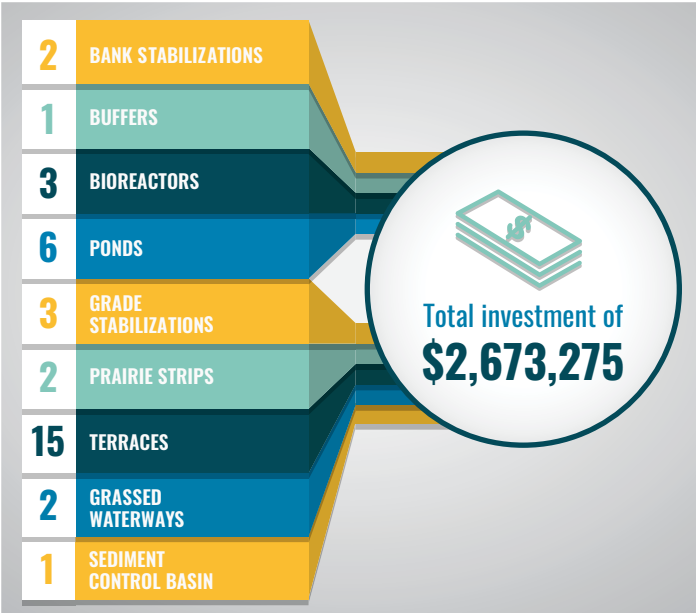
After five years, work has wrapped up on projects designed to stabilize and preserve the West Nishnabotna River Watershed.

The watershed, a tributary of the Missouri River, is used heavily for recreation and tourism.

It provides many historic and cultural resources, including the only state-designated water trail in Southwest Iowa.

The West Nishnabotna River Watershed Project represents a total investment of more than \$2.6 million in 36 practices.

MAPA helped secure federal and state grant funding to support these efforts.



Connect Nebraska Broadband Initiative launched

Nebraska is launching four new programs to expand broadband access across the state

On Sept. 7, Nebraska's State Broadband Coordinator announced the state's specific programs to expand reliable, high-speed internet service.

Patrick Redmond said the Connect Nebraska working group will be helping to administer the new federal programs.

The new broadband programs include funding from



the American Rescue Plan Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Investment and Jobs Act.

- **The Capital Projects Fund** - \$87.7 million to support broadband infrastructure
- **Broadband Equity, Access, & Deployment Program (BEAD)** - \$100 million to provide broadband to unserved locations, underserved locations, and community institutions like schools, libraries and health clinics
- **Digital Equity Grant Program** - \$7 million to ensure residents have tools and training needed to make the most of internet resources. Grants can be used for digital literacy training, workforce development, and to increase access to electronic devices. MAPA and its partners in the Nebraska Regional Officials Council (NROC) will be assisting with the outreach for this program.
- **Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program** - Internet service providers and public power districts can apply for grants to construct, improve, or acquire broadband infrastructure that does not connect directly to an end-user location such as a household or school

Nebraska is launching a website, broadband.nebraska.gov, to act as a central hub for information on the new broadband programs.

Carson & Macedonia DTR projects wrap up

Downtown revitalization projects wrapped up this year in Macedonia and Carson, Iowa.

Community Development Block Grant and C.I.T.I.E.S. funding secured by MAPA helped give facelifts to the communities' business districts through the construction of new building facades.



Council of Officials Speaker to focus on civic pride cont.

"If a city wants to improve every day, you will have to start doing the hard work of improvement, relentless incremental improvement."

How does a community begin to tackle what can seem to be an insurmountable mountain to climb to rebuild civic pride?

"Start small. Start with aesthetics - we all feel better when things get a little better. It gives us optimism," said Siegler. "Start with what is easiest. Plant some flowers and pick up trash. Small victories."

Siegler said once residents see these small changes they will start to care about their town and civic apathy will begin to change into civic pride. "As things get more orderly and more attractive, people will recognize it."

MAPA Council of Officials Annual Dinner Meeting

October 5, 2022

5:30 p.m. Social Hour

6:45 p.m. Dinner

Registration \$30 per person

Register by Sept. 30 at:

MAPA2022COOAnnualMeeting.eventbrite.com

C.I.T.I.E.S. funding aids community infrastructure needs

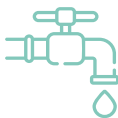
The mission of the Community Improvement to Increase Economic Stability (C.I.T.I.E.S.) program is to create a sustainable funding mechanism to assist communities as needed with existing infrastructure and public facilities improvements resulting in increased economic development.

The program is funded by the Iowa West Foundation to assist communities in Pottawattamie County.

In the past year, the C.I.T.I.E.S. program awarded grants to Neola and Avoca for infrastructure projects.



THE CITY OF NEOLA
\$100,000
For water treatment plant improvements



THE CITY OF NEOLA
\$50,000
For for water system upgrades



THE CITY OF AVOCA
\$222,000
For infrastructure for a new subdivision being constructed

MAPA hires new C&O Manager

MAPA has a new Communications & Outreach Manager.

Laura Heilman, who served as the agency’s Community Relations Liaison/ Project Coordinator for the past two years, was promoted to Communications & Outreach Manager on Sept. 12.

Heilman has a wealth of experience. Prior to working at MAPA, she held positions as Grants Manager for Habitat Omaha, Communications Director for the Omaha Municipal Land Bank and Strategic Communications Coordinator for HDR.

She credits her work at HDR for turning her into a self-described “infrastructure nerd.”



“I’m very mission-oriented and I’m super excited to help MAPA serve and support our members, “ said Heilman.

In addition to her three children who keep her very busy, Laura enjoys exploring the infrastructure of the MAPA region and other cities when she travels.

Congratulations, Laura!

CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2022

- 14 Finance Committee 8:30 a.m.
- 16 Transportation Committee 10:00 a.m.
- 22 MAPA Board of Directors 1:30 p.m.

OCTOBER 2022

- 05 Council of Officials Annual Meeting 5:30 p.m.
- 07 Regional Planning (Heartland 2050 RPAC) 10:00 a.m.
- 10 Columbus Day/ Indigenous Peoples' Day
MAPA Offices Closed
- 12 RPA-18* 11:00 a.m.
- 19 Finance Committee 8:30 a.m.
Coordinated Transit 10:30 a.m.
- 21 Transportation Committee 10:00 a.m.
- 27 MAPA Board of Directors 1:30 p.m.

* meeting may be virtual
Meetings at MAPA unless otherwise noted

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

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