

MOVING FORWARD



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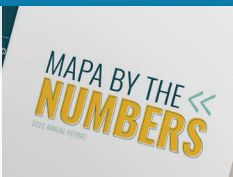
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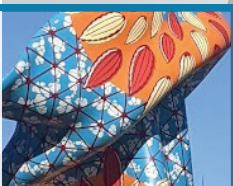
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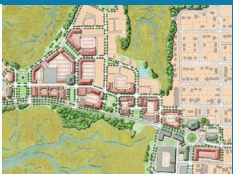
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Pacific Junction City Clerk leads office with her heart

Little did Korrena Nepl know when she moved from California to Mills County, Iowa, in 1982, she would become the Pacific Junction City Clerk and be a lifeline for her community through the long recovery process following the catastrophic 2019 floods.

A Pacific Junction resident since 2001, Nepl worked as the part-time city clerk in Silver City, and served on the Pacific Junction City Council before becoming the City's clerk. But nothing could prepare her for the challenges of the devastation left by the floods.

"The hardest thing was looking into the faces of the people, hearing their stories, and not being able to help enough."

Korrena Nepl

"The greatest challenges have been staying strong and fighting for the town as a whole. I had made a promise to myself that I would not give up until I had helped every last person either get their buyout or the resources needed to stay," said Nepl. "The hardest thing was looking into the faces of the people, hearing their stories, and not being able to help enough."

She faced a large learning curve and long days to become familiar with federal and state grant guidelines, tackle mountains of paperwork, and attend dozens of meetings—all the while working in another town because the floods destroyed city hall and trying to navigate the process as a flood survivor herself.

The human toll on fellow residents made her job a test of endurance and perseverance. "We've had several deaths of residents. Some never got to see their buyout or died right after receiving it," said Nepl. "Deaths are still taking place, and I truly believe the stress of the disaster really hurt people's health."

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MAPA presents its 2022 Annual Awards

MAPA recognized two individuals and one organization for their outstanding work in the region at its Council of Officials Annual Meeting on Oct. 5 in Glenwood, Iowa.



Korrena Neppi, City Clerk for Pacific Junction, Iowa, received MAPA’s 2022 Regional Citizenship Award, Front Porch Investments received MAPA’s 2022 Regional Service Award and David Brown, retired Greater Omaha Chamber President & CEO, received MAPA’s Award of Merit.

The Award of Merit is MAPA’s highest award for service. From 2003 until his retirement in 2022, Brown worked tirelessly to improve the quality of people’s lives in the Greater Omaha region through economic development, understanding that improvements to the built environment are necessary to offer the lifestyle options the region’s diverse workforce desires.

“Through his leadership, David has helped the MAPA region begin to focus on building vibrant places which attract people, and young talent in particular,” said Michael Helgerson, MAPA Executive Director. “He’s accomplished this through efforts such as the Urban Core Strategic Plan and his work to create a robust transportation network to increase mobility and connectivity.”

The Regional Citizenship Award honors an individual who recognized regional problems and initiated and supported policies which required a shared regional effort and contributed to the region’s quality of life.

As Pacific Junction City Clerk and a flood survivor herself, Korrena Neppi has been a selfless leader throughout the entire process of helping the community recover in the aftermath of the historic 2019 floods by assisting the City and residents in securing state and federal aid.

The Regional Service Award is given to groups that have contributed to the metropolitan area to help improve or grow it.

Created in 2021, Front Porch Investments has jump-started a regional conversation about the need for affordable housing and has built a fund to support housing development throughout the region.

MAPA publishes agency's 2022 Annual Report

QR codes that link to MAPA’s drone photography and an interactive map featuring the agency’s regional projects. Those are a few of the exciting elements in MAPA’s 2022 Annual Report, “MAPA by the Numbers.”

This report, published Oct. 4, uses data to demonstrate the value and impact of MAPA’s work in the six-county Omaha-Council Bluffs region.

The QR codes provide links to short videos of regional projects taken by MAPA’s FAA Certified Drone Pilot Owen Stuckey.

Take a look: **MAPA by the Numbers**. You can also find the 2022 Annual Report on our website at: tinyurl.com/2022MAPAAnnualRpt

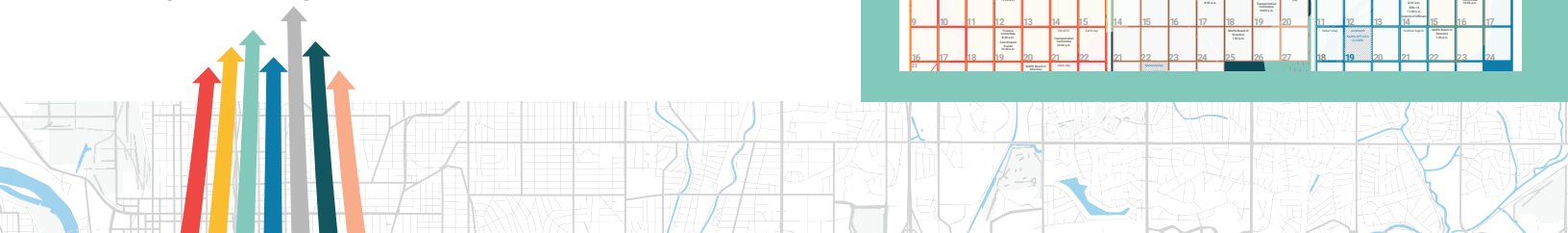


2023 MAPA Calendars are available for public

Planners are used to thinking ahead, and MAPA is here to help you plan your schedule for the upcoming year. Our poster-sized 2023 wall calendars are now available!

For several decades MAPA has printed an annual calendar, which is available free of charge to anyone.

If you would like to reserve one, contact Liz Zeller, MAPA Administrative Assistant, at ezeller@mapacog.org.



MAPA entry wins NADO's photo contest



Photo by Isabelle Fleming, C&O Intern

We have some exciting news to share! MAPA submitted a photo of the newly redeveloped Gene Leahy Mall for the National Association of Development Organizations' (NADO) photo contest and it won the "Building Vibrant Places" category.

In 2019, the City began a \$325 million riverfront transformational redevelopment project to include three parks. The Gene Leahy Mall is the first of these parks to open.

These efforts are part of the Urban Core Strategic Plan to bring partners on both sides of the Missouri River together to continue investment in the region's central business district.

MAPA awarded funding to reconfigure downtown streets around the park to have two-way traffic, enhance walkability, and support multimodal transportation connections.

MAPA seeks feedback in 2022 Member Survey

MAPA Annual Member Survey is available now.

This year's survey contains questions on the following topics:

- **Community Assistance**
- **Housing & Development**
- **Transportation**

Every year we survey our member communities to understand the issues they are facing and to help plan for MAPA's assistance in the coming year.

Please take a moment to complete it at: tinyurl.com/MemberSurvey2024 or scan this QR code:



Responses will be accepted through **January 13, 2023**.

U.S. EDA awards Blair \$1.5 million for water infrastructure improvements

Business growth at the biocampus facility in Blair will receive a boost through a \$1.5 million grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA).

The EDA awarded the City of Blair the grant to increase water capacity to the city's biocampus to support a more than \$300 million expansion.

The grant will be matched with \$2 million in local funds and is expected to create 115 jobs and generate \$345 million in private investment.

MAPA secured the \$1.5 million grant for the City of Blair and will administer the project. MAPA's Community Development planners are available to assist your community too. Contact Grant Anderson, MAPA Community & Economic Development Manager at 402-444-6866, ext. 3222 or at ganderson@mapacog.org



City of Omaha unveils Urban Ag Zoning Ordinance

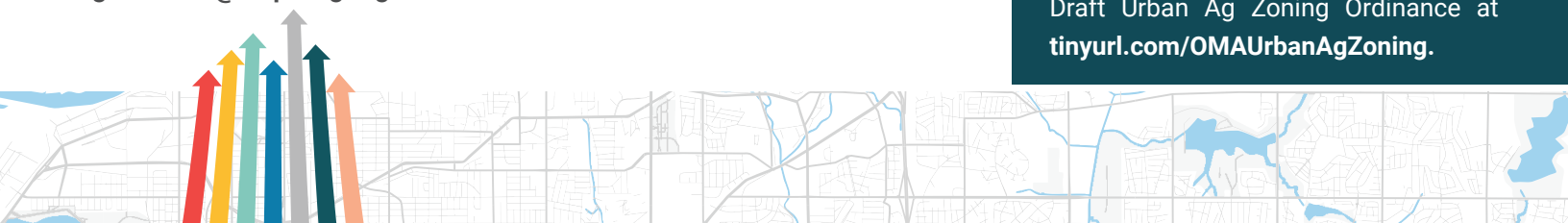
A 2018 Community Needs Assessment determined approximately 12.4% of the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro population experiences food insecurity.

To increase the ability of residents to grow healthy foods and reduce food insecurity, the City of Omaha Planning Department, in coordination with Heartland 2050 Local Food Coordinating Council, has developed a Draft Urban Agriculture Guide which includes an Urban Agriculture Zoning Ordinance.

The Draft Urban Agriculture Guide includes four urban agriculture classifications. These classifications vary depending on the intensity of activity and underlying zoning district and have different permitting requirements.

The proposed Urban Agriculture Zoning Ordinance would allow permanent and temporary structures as well as on-site sales with a conditional use permit.

A public meeting for the Urban Ag Guide and Zoning Ordinance is scheduled for 6 p.m. Nov. 17 on Zoom (Meeting link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84418195912>). View the Draft Urban Ag Guide at tinyurl.com/OMAUrbanAgGuide and the Draft Urban Ag Zoning Ordinance at tinyurl.com/OMAUrbanAgZoning.



Omaha to host Active Mobility Plan Open Houses

The City of Omaha is looking for input as it creates its Active Mobility Master Plan. The plan will be a guide to improve walking, biking and other forms of active mobility.

For more information about the Active Mobility Master Plan and to take the survey go to: tinyurl.com/OMAActiveMobilityPlan

Attend one of two open houses the city is hosting:

Open House #1

Wednesday, November 9, 2022, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
The Venue at The Highlander
2120 N. 30th St.
Omaha

Open House #2

Thursday, November 10, 2022, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center, Rm 205
University of Nebraska Omaha
6400 University Drive South

continued from Pacific Junction City Clerk leads office with her heart

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's home buyout program compensates homeowners for their property loss but prevents them from rebuilding on that same land. For Nepl, it is a bittersweet experience.

"You hand them their check offering them the relief they deserve and wait for so long, knowing they are leaving and never coming back. Every person you helped get the buyout was, ultimately, another nail in the coffin towards killing your town," said Nepl.

For this determined city clerk, hobbies and vacations remain on hold while she works to get the few remaining residents their buyouts.

"I want my legacy to be that I was part of rebuilding Pacific Junction after the catastrophic floods of 2019 and that I always treated the flood victims with dignity, respect and kindness, and that my colleagues see my sometimes overbearing, 'say anything' personality as passion because I cared."

For her unwavering dedication to help her community, MAPA awarded Korrena Nepl its 2022 Regional Citizenship Award.



Staff member earns AICP certification

At MAPA, we encourage staff members to seek career development opportunities. One such opportunity is the AICP Certification. We're happy to announce that Ryan Ossell, MAPA Community & Economic Development Associate Planner, earned his AICP certification recently.



The American Institute of Certified Planners provides the only nationwide, independent verification of planners' qualifications. Certified plan-

ners pledge to uphold high standards of practice, ethics, and professional conduct, and to keep their skills sharp and up to date by pursuing advanced professional education continuously.

"I wanted to earn my AICP because it shows my proficiency as a planner and allows me to further my career in the planning field," said Ossell. "Going forward into my career, it will allow me access to various opportunities that I would not have access to without it."

Congratulations, Ryan, on your accomplishment!

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 2022

- 11 Veterans Day**
MAPA Offices Closed
- 24 Thanksgiving Day**
MAPA Offices Closed
- 25 Thanksgiving Friday**
MAPA Offices Closed
- 30 Finance Committee**
8:30 a.m.

DECEMBER 2022

- 02 Transportation Committee and Regional Planning (Heartland 2050 RPAC)**
10:00 a.m.
Omaha Public Library
Milton Abrahams Branch
5111 N 90th St, Omaha, NE
- 08 MAPA Board of Directors**
1:30 p.m.
- 14 Council of Officials**
- 23 Christmas Eve Observance**
MAPA Offices Closed
- 26 Christmas Day Observance**
MAPA Offices Closed

 U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

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