

MOVING FORWARD

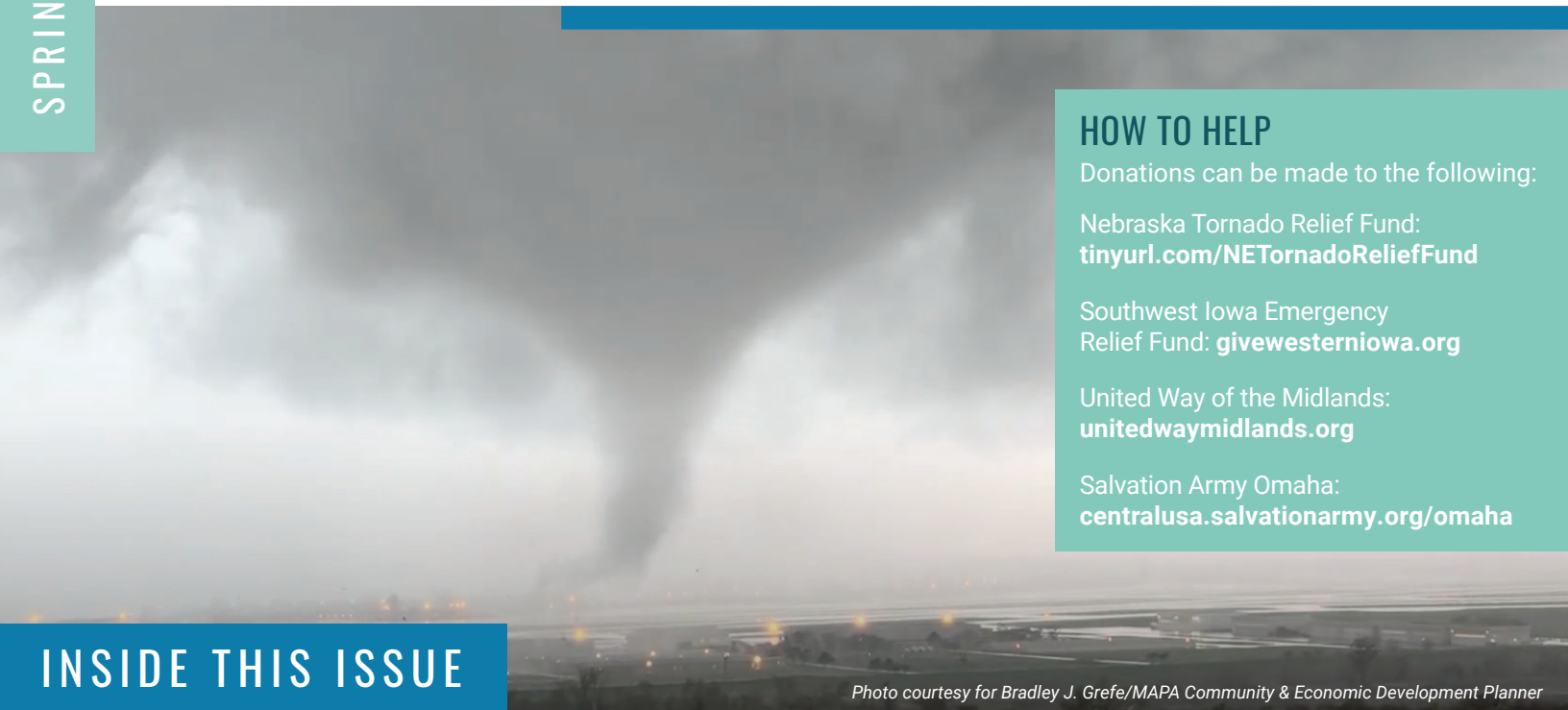


Photo courtesy for Bradley J. Grefe/MAPA Community & Economic Development Planner

HOW TO HELP

Donations can be made to the following:

Nebraska Tornado Relief Fund:
tinyurl.com/NETornadoReliefFund

Southwest Iowa Emergency Relief Fund: givewesterniowa.org

United Way of the Midlands:
unitedwaymidlands.org

Salvation Army Omaha:
centralusa.salvationarmy.org/omaha

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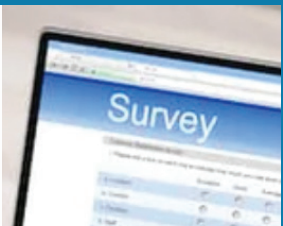
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FEMA teams arrive to assist in tornado-damaged Nebraska and Iowa counties

Funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is available now to homeowners and renters in Douglas and Washington Counties in Nebraska and Pottawattamie County in Iowa impacted by the April 26th tornadoes after President Biden approved federal disaster declaration requests from governors of both states.

FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance (DSA) Teams have been working in all affected counties in coordination with state and county emergency management. FEMA teams will be helping homeowners and renters apply for assistance.

Assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of the disaster.

Those affected can begin the process by registering at disasterassistance.gov, calling 1-800-621-3362 or using the FEMA app.

Preliminary findings of the National Weather Service Omaha confirm nine tornadoes touched down in the Omaha-Council Bluffs region on April 26. Five were EF-3 tornadoes, with estimated wind speeds of 136 to 165 mph.

Tornadoes destroyed an estimated 1,230 homes in Nebraska. Updated assessments from Pottawattamie County Emergency Management officials show 302 homes and businesses county-wide experienced some level of damage. 194 properities in Minden were impacted; 65 of them were destroyed.

While no one in Nebraska suffered serious injuries, a man in Minden died from injuries he received when a tornado touched down in the small Pottawattamie County community of approximately 600 people.

MAPA anticipates assisting affected communities by securing funding to help with recovery efforts.

Our hearts are with those impacted by the tornado outbreak.



Council of Officials set for June 12

Mark your calendars! MAPA's next Council of Officials meeting will take place June 12 at the Strategic Air Command & Aerospace Museum in Ashland, Nebraska.

Registration begins at 11 a.m. with a buffet lunch at 11:15 a.m. Following the business portion of the meeting, guests will receive a guided tour of the museum.

Register at <https://tinyurl.com/COOJune2024>



WE-STEP gathers input through online public meeting

The Cities of Gretna, Papillon and Springfield, in collaboration with Sarpy County and MAPA, gathered public feedback public for the Western Sarpy County Transportation Enhancement Plan (WE-STEP) through an online public meeting.

The plan will identify a proposed future regional transportation network and proactive standards that are flexible and can fit with what develops around it.

Participants were asked to share locations where they experience traffic jams, types of bicycle and pedestrian network additions that would be helpful, where safety improvements should be made and locations for potential future development.

The Western Sarpy County Transportation Enhancement Plan is expected to be completed in the summer.



2024 Pottawattamie County Housing Trust Fund Grants Awarded

For Robin Timmerman and her mother, Sherry Bradway, having the crumbling ramp to their home replaced in 2023 by Connections Area Agency on Aging not only improved their quality of life, it made it safer. "It (the ramp) was dangerous and very scary," said Timmerman. "My sister didn't want to come in the house when she picked up my Mom."

The new ramp makes all the difference in her and her mother's lives. "It's easier to get in with the walker and the wheelchair, and it's safer."

Connections hired the contractor who replaced Timmerman's ramp with grant funding it received from the Pottawattamie County Housing Trust Fund. Connections is again one of the groups that will receive grant funding from the trust fund's 2024 application cycle. For 2024, the trust awarded a total of \$375,000 in grants to the following organizations and projects:

For owner-occupied home rehabilitation, repairs and accessibility improvements:

- **Connections Area Agency on Aging - \$50,000**
- **Habitat for Humanity Council Bluffs - \$41,356**

For down payment assistance:

- **Habitat for Humanity Council Bluffs - \$50,000**

For rehab of rental housing units, emergency shelters and transitional units:

- **New Visions Homeless Services - \$63,644**
- **Peace Haven Retirement Home - \$75,000**
- **MICAH House - \$20,000**

For rental assistance including deposit and eviction aversion services

- **InterFaith Response - \$25,000**
- **Iowa Legal Aid - \$25,000**
- **Pottawattamie County General Assistance - \$25,000**

Each year the Pottawattamie County Housing Trust Fund allocates funding to organizations or individuals that serve the housing needs of low to moderate-income residents within Pottawattamie County, Iowa.

MAPA is the grant administrator for the Pottawattamie County Housing Trust Fund and provides staff services including annual housing assistance plans and grant applications, project and fiscal management and compliance with Iowa Finance Authority requirements.

May is National Bike Month. Created in 1956, National Bike Month celebrates the many benefits of biking. On April 25, 2024, MAPA's Board of Directors proclaimed May 1-31, 2024, as Bike Month in the Omaha-Council Bluffs region.

Here is an update on a few bike projects in the region.

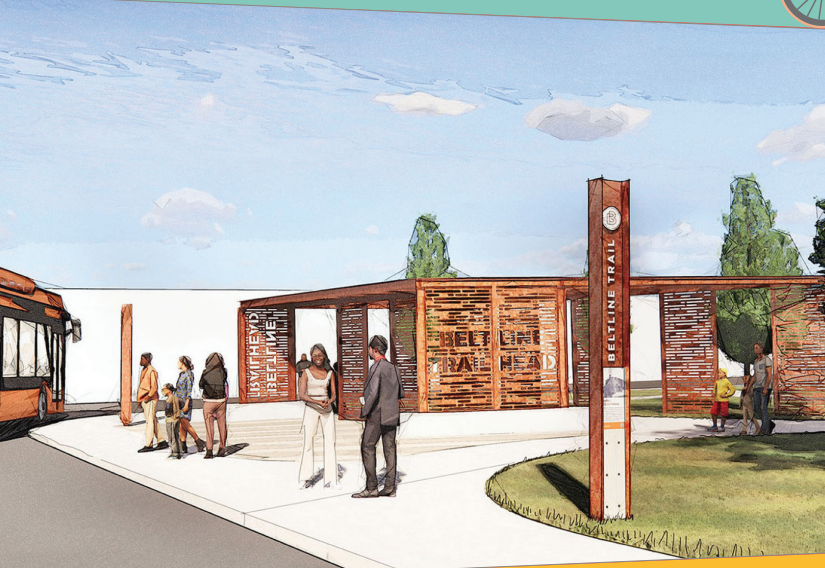
Platte River Bridge Trail

Construction began in February on the final phase of the Platte River Bridge Trail which will provide a connection for bikes and pedestrians along Hwy 75 between Sarpy and Cass Counties. Crews have installed pilings, constructed abutments, placed girders and poured concrete for the first section of the trail deck. The project is expected to be completed in Fall 2024. *(Photo Courtesy: Eric Williams)*



Beltline Trail

Construction on Phase III and Phase IV of the Beltline Trail will begin in 2025. Phase III will extend from the trailhead at Hamilton Street and Military Avenue to Grant Street at 40th Street in Omaha. Phase IV will be along JA Creighton Boulevard. The rendering to the left are from the trailhead at Hamilton St. and Military Ave., which will be a prominent feature of Phase Three.



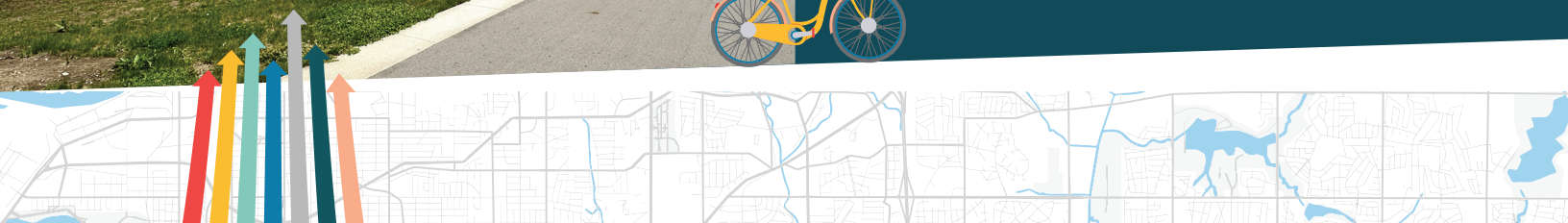
Mopac East Trail

A study is underway to determine the best possible routes for closing the eight-mile gap in the Mopac East Trail from Lincoln to Omaha. Currently, the 22-mile long trail, which connects to the Mopac Trail in Lincoln, ends in Wabash, Nebraska. Two years ago, the Nebraska Legislature allocated \$8.3 million to fill the gap with an eight-foot-wide trail that would connect from Wabash to the Lied Platte River Bridge near South Bend, Nebraska.



FIRST AVE Trail

People using the FIRST AVE trail in Council Bluffs now have four, diverse murals to experience along the trail. The City spearheaded the project with financial support from the Iowa West Foundation. The murals are painted by local artists.



Applications open for CDBG Disaster Recovery Funds

Applications are open for city or county governments to apply for funds from the 2019 Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery New for Sale Housing Program in Iowa.

These funds help communities recover from Presidentially-declared disasters.

Program eligibility has expanded to include Pottawattamie County, in addition to Mills, Harrison and Fremont Counties.

Iowa Economic Development Authority will host a virtual

application workshop on Tuesday, June, 18, 2024, at 2 p.m. to discuss program requirements in greater detail.

Applicants need to be city or county governments which have procured a private or nonprofit developer to construct single family housing to sell to low-to-moderate income households which are at or below 80% of the area median income.

The application can be found on iowagrants.gov under "view current funding opportunities."

Applications will be open until Sept. 30, 2024 at 11:59 p.m.

MAPA Staff News

MAPA is happy to welcome its newest Transportation Planner, Mia Haschenburger! Mia is a decorated scholar with Master's degrees in Geology and Chemistry from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Currently, she is finishing her Master's degree in Community and Regional Planning. She is excited to begin seeing how her work affects people everyday. In her little free time, Mia enjoys biking, playing hockey and going to see dance performances. Welcome to the team, Mia!



Congratulations to both Natasha Barrett and Christina Brownell for celebrating their 10-year anniversaries with MAPA. Natasha was honored at the March board meeting while Christina was honored at the April board meeting.

Natasha started at MAPA as a part-time Accounting Assistant. Over the years, she received five promotions. Today, Natasha is a Fiscal Analyst and a dedicated member of our Finance & Accounting Team. Her sharp attention to details is an asset to the agency.



Christina started as an administrative assistant and was promoted several times. She now serves as MAPA's Director of Administration and is the driving force behind the agency's Human Resources work. Christina's detail-oriented eye helps agency trips and events run smoothly.



Thank you for all you do for MAPA, Christina and Natasha!

CALENDAR

MAY 2024

23 **MAPA Board of Directors**
1:30 p.m.

27 **Memorial Day**
MAPA Offices Closed

JUNE 2024

07 **Regional Planning**
(Heartland 2050 RPAC)
10:00 a.m.

12 **Council of Officials**
11:00 a.m.

18 **Finance Committee**
8:30 a.m.

19 **Juneteenth**
MAPA Offices Closed

21 **Transportation Committee**
10:00 a.m.

27 **MAPA Board of Directors**
1:30 p.m.

 U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

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