

# NIAACOG NEWS

Vol. 25 No. 2

NORTH IOWA AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

April 2014 – May 2014

## Advertising Now Available on Region 2 Transit System Buses

Recently, the Region 2 Transit System entered into an agreement with Houck Advertising of St. Paul, Minnesota. The project was developed through the Region 2 Transit Advisory Group as a way to increase revenue for the transit system and provide an avenue for a number of agencies and businesses to promote their projects and services.



Advertising on Region 2 Transit System buses is an effective and cost-efficient form of outdoor advertising. Bus ads generate valuable impressions quickly leading to behavior-changing frequency levels. Bus ads will place an advertiser's message at the busiest intersections, malls, schools, and other high traffic commercial areas of the region, multiple times each day. Bus ads also will be able to cover residential and commercial areas of the region not reached by outdoor billboards. No other out of home option gives advertisers the flexibility and staying power at such an affordable price as advertising on the Region 2 Transit System.

Bus ads are high impact moving billboards that grab the audience's attention directly at eye level! Region 2 Transit System buses travel hundreds of miles each day projecting a message throughout a community and giving advertisers the opportunity to keep a company or organization's name and message top-of-mind all month long.

For information about advertising on Region 2 Transit buses please, contact Houck Transit Advertising by calling **800-777-7290**, email to [quotes@houckads.net](mailto:quotes@houckads.net), or visit their website at [www.houckads.com](http://www.houckads.com).

## Intro to Planning & Zoning

Registration for the 2014 Introduction to Planning and Zoning for Local Officials workshop is still open. The workshop in our area will be at the Best Western Holiday Lodge in Clear Lake on April 8<sup>th</sup>.

The three-hour workshop is designed to introduce the basic principles of land use planning and development management to elected officials, planning and zoning officials, and board of adjustment members without formal training in the subjects. Using case scenarios in a highly interactive format, the workshop highlights issues frequently faced in the land use process.

The evening begins with a light supper at 5:30 p.m. The program begins at 6:00 p.m. and concludes by 8:45 p.m. Registration is \$65 per individual or \$50 per person if a city or county registers five or more officials to attend. The fee covers the workshop instruction, workshop materials, and supper.

To register online and receive a meal you must have registered at least one week before the scheduled date of the workshop. You may register and pay at the door on the day of the workshop if you have not registered by the one-week deadline; however, no meal will be provided.

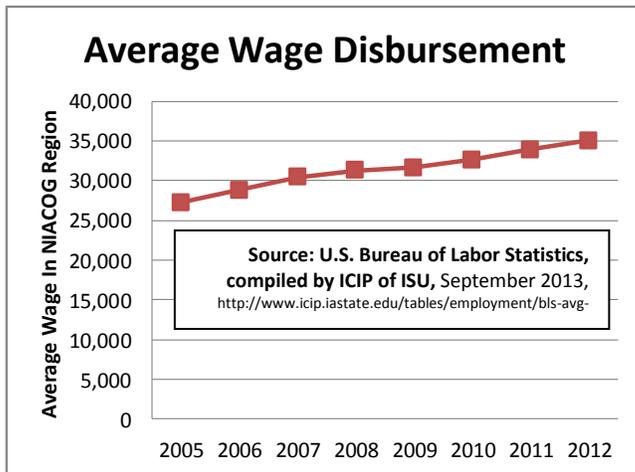
Further information can be found at <http://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/planningBLUZ/files/2010/02/PZ-final1.pdf>

# Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

NIACOG's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy has been prepared and is available for review and comment on our website at [www.niacog.org](http://www.niacog.org). The strategy includes analysis of economic factors in our region (broken down by county) and sets forth strategies for improvement during the coming five (5) years. Thanks to all of you who participated in the input sessions!

## Economic Environment Snapshot

Here are a few interesting tidbits from the economic analysis:



Income: Even after adjustment for inflation, personal income in the NIACOG region rose by 31% between 2005 and 2012. Per capita income for the NIACOG region (\$47,548) exceeded both statewide (\$43,935) and federal (\$43,735) levels by a notable margin of 8%.

Wages: Steady wage increases were experienced by the region from 2005 to 2012. With inflation adjustment, wages increased 11% for the region, during the period. That increase was more than that of the State and Nation, but despite these gains the average wage in the region (\$35,001) remains substantially less than average wage for the State and Nation by 13% and 30%, respectively.

Farm Economy: Net Cash Income from farming in Iowa nearly tripled between 2005 and 2012. This income is helping substantially to boost the per capita income in the NIACOG region.

Population: The population of the region was estimated at 125,722 for 2012. It has declined with every decennial Census since 1960 and is now lower than its 1910 population. However, Woods & Poole is predicting slow steady growth for the next 30 years. Workforce availability will decline sharply after 2010 as baby boomers begin to retire, and the number of younger workers continues to decline. The decline

of the younger workforce is largely caused by outmigration of over 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of young adults and a steadily declining rate of births.

Unemployment: The unemployment level for the NIACOG region spiked sharply in 2009 to 7.4% (during the national recession) and reached its highest level in 20 years. Since then, it has declined at a good steady pace and is expected to reach its pre-spike level within the next year.

Education: Although the region exceeds the statewide and national high school graduation rates and associate degree rates, the state and nation are significantly exceeding the region in both bachelor and graduate degrees. College educated young adults are moving out of the area at alarming rates to: obtain higher paying jobs, find jobs in their field, pay off high student debt, and/or experience the excitement of big city life.

Housing: One-third of the region's housing was built prior to 1940, and only 17% was built within the past 30 years. This is significantly less than the 29% built in the State during the past 30 years and 42% for the nation.

## Strategic Regional Projects

As a result of the input session, the following regional projects were identified as priority projects:

1. Continued education, recruitment, training, and matching underemployed to jobs.
2. Broadband expansion to any areas not currently served
3. Physical improvements – housing, bike trails, infrastructure, etc.
4. Expansion of existing industries nontraditional new skills training – offering courses during ‘off’ hours for those unable to attend during normal class hours
5. Develop partnerships of EDC's, businesses, schools, banks, and NIACOG
6. Retain/Attract younger adults (up to 52) by promoting mid-level jobs, developing mid-level skills, social media, and/or summer internships.
7. Promote, organize, and share best practices (how to's) for economic development and community development efforts throughout the NIACOG region.
8. Create a community foundation to assist with community development

Regarding item 7 above, in future newsletters watch for feature articles from our area EDC's, Iowa Workforce Development, and other partners to share information about tools that have been created and are available to you and methods that can be copied in pursuing economic and community development.

Again, thank you to all who participated in development of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy!

## Iowa CDBG Housing Fund Activity



2013 was another busy year in the NIACOG region in regard to Iowa CDBG Housing Fund Activity, and steady activity is carrying right over into 2014. Two Housing Fund Programs that were given administrative assistance by NIACOG Staff were closed out in 2013 and it is anticipated that three more programs will be completed before the end of this year. The following is a description of all 5 of these programs.

### Sheffield Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program

This was a 2010 Housing Fund award in which 9 housing rehabilitation projects were completed. This program closed out in 2013.

### Burt Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program

This was a 2011 Housing Fund award in which 9 housing rehabilitation projects were also completed. This program also closed out in 2013.

### Thornton Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program

This was also 2011 Housing Fund award in which 9 housing rehabilitation projects were completed. The 9<sup>th</sup> and final project was completed last month so close-out of the Program is currently underway.

### Thompson Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program

This is a 2012 Housing Fund award. Rehabilitation projects on six homes have been completed or are in process, and the final phase of the program (2 more projects) is now underway.

### Whittemore Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program

This is also 2012 Housing Fund award. Rehabilitation projects on seven homes have been completed or are in process, and the final phase of the program (2 more projects) is now underway.

Congratulations are in order to the above five Housing Fund recipients who have completed or are now winding down their Housing Fund Programs. As a result of these Programs, 44 housing units in the NIACOG region will be more safe, sound, and affordable.

It is also noted that NIACOG will continue to offer rehabilitation assistance throughout 2014 to 2 cities that were awarded Housing Fund grants last year (Program Year 2013). These are the communities of Garner and Grafton. The Garner Program has a performance target of 10 rehabilitated homes, and the Grafton Program has a performance target of 6 rehabilitated homes. The first phase of both of these Programs

is well underway and contractor bid solicitations will begin soon.

The CDBG Housing Fund, now officially known as the CDBG Residential Housing Sustainability Program, provides funding from the U.S. Department of HUD in order to expand or retain the supply of decent and affordable housing for low and very low-income households in Iowa through single family owner-occupied rehabilitation programs. A single-family property occupied as the principal residents by a qualified homeowner is eligible for rehabilitation assistance. This includes single family detached units, attached/townhouse (zero lot line) units, and condominium units. Manufactured homes are also eligible when the land and the home are both owned by the owner-occupant, when the home is installed on a permanent foundation, and when it taxed as real property.

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## Hazard Mitigation Plans Update

NIACOG staff is continuing work on the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plans in the region. We greatly appreciate the time that county/city staff and residents have spent scheduling and participating in meetings. Below are the updates on the current planning projects:



- **Franklin County** – Plan is in queue at FEMA for final review before FEMA approval.
- **Worth County** – Plan is approved by FEMA and at grant closeout.
- **Hancock County** – Plan has been reviewed by jurisdictions and FEMA. NIACOG staff is preparing final draft for FEMA approval
- **Mitchell County** – Plan draft is being reviewed by FEMA and jurisdictions.

If you have any questions regarding the hazard mitigation plans, feel free to contact Matt O'Brien at [mobrien@niacog.org](mailto:mobrien@niacog.org) or 641-423-0491, ext. 14.



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## Calendar of Events

### April

- 1<sup>st</sup> – **NIACOG Offices Closed (April Fools)**
- 8<sup>th</sup> – **Introduction to P/Z for Local Officials**  
 @Best Western Holiday Lodge, Clear Lake, 5:30pm
- 9<sup>th</sup> – **Haz-Mat Meeting**  
 @NIACOG, 1:00 pm
- 9<sup>th</sup> – **Transportation Policy Board Meeting**  
 @NIACOG, 2:30pm
- 14<sup>th</sup> – **NIACOG Executive Board Meeting**  
 @NIACOG, 12:00pm

### May

- 1<sup>st</sup> – **Iowa Smart Conference**  
 Des Moines
- 12<sup>th</sup> - **NIACOG Board of Directors Meeting**  
 @ Bennigan's Grill, Clear Lake, 7:00pm
- 15<sup>th</sup> – **CDBG Recipient Workshop**  
 Ames
- 15<sup>th</sup> – **Passenger Transportation Summit**  
 Marshalltown
- 16<sup>th</sup> – **North Iowa City Clerk's Meeting**  
 @NIACOG, 9:30am
- 26<sup>th</sup> – **NIACOG Offices Closed (Memorial Day)**

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