

# NIACOG NEWS

Vol. 24 No. 5

NORTH IOWA AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Dec. 2013 – Jan. 2014

## RIVER TOWN OF THE YEAR – NOMINATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED

Iowa Rivers Revival -- an organization committed to protecting Iowa's rivers and streams and watersheds -- invites you to nominate your city for IRR's River Town of the Year award. The annual River Town of the Year award recognizes an Iowa town or city for outstanding efforts to reclaim riverfronts as anchors for economic development, recreation, and good ecological practices. Cities are invited to apply for the award, or citizens may nominate their town. Previous "River Town" award recipients are Webster City, Elkader, Coon Rapids, Cedar Falls, Charles City (honored in 2012), Central City, and Dubuque. Applications are due by December 1, 2013. The award will be presented in January 2014 at a reception hosted by Iowa Rivers Revival in the River Town of the Year community.



Cedar River in Charles City.

For a detailed application or more information, please go to [www.iowarivers.org](http://www.iowarivers.org) or contact Jenn Dreier, IRR Administrative Coordinator: [jdreier@iowarivers.org](mailto:jdreier@iowarivers.org), 515-724-4093

## NIACOG REGION SELECTED TO HOST THREE STATE PLANNING CONFERENCE

The NIACOG region has been selected to host the Upper Midwest American Planning Association Conference in October 2014, which includes Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin! We are excited about this opportunity and would like to feature some really great North Iowa projects during the learning sessions. If your community has a project that you would like to have included, please contact Myrtle Nelson at NIACOG (641-423-0491 x16) or [mnelson@niacog.org](mailto:mnelson@niacog.org).



The theme for the conference is "*Making Places Great: Embracing the Past & Staging the Future*". A local host committee of 12 people from North Iowa has already been assembled, but please let Myrtle know if you would like to join the team. Our next meeting will be in January 2014.

With a mix of classroom style learning sessions, bus tours, a self-guided walking tour, and on-site consultants and professional planners, the conference has a lot to offer North Iowans interested in community development. Some topics being considered include: downtown façade projects, understanding development, rain gardens, blue zones, sustainability, Charles City's whitewater course, green development, lake front

development, historic preservation, aging populations, public off-leash recreational areas, and planning as a career.

As you can see, this will be a great learning opportunity for government officials, planning and zoning commission members, zoning board of adjustment members, planning and public policy students, and citizens interested in their communities. So, reserve **October 22-24, 2014** on your calendar to attend this event!!

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## NEW NIACOG EMPLOYEE



Jennifer Butler joined NIACOG as a regional planner in November. She graduated from the University of Northern Iowa with a Bachelor's in Public Administration and a Master's of Public Policy. She also has experience with GIS through her education at UNI and work at Aerial Services, Inc. Previously, Jennifer worked as a library assistant at the Waterloo Public Library and planning intern with the City of Waterloo's Planning and Zoning Department. Currently at NIACOG, she works on environmental assessments for several area CDBG projects.

Jennifer is originally from Clear Lake and currently lives there with her boyfriend (Cale), dog (Tyson), and cat (Escobar). She is very excited to now be working in the area. Jennifer is also eager to learn and work with the great staff at NIACOG.

Jennifer can be contacted at [jbutler@niacog.org](mailto:jbutler@niacog.org) or 641-423-0491, ext. 18.

## DERELICT BUILDING PROGRAM



The Derelict Building Program provides funding to address neglected structures in order to improve the appearance of an area and revitalize local economies. The funds can be used for investigations and assessments of environmental contamination, renovation, and demolition using a process called deconstruction. A feature of the grant program is the diversion of construction materials from the landfill. IDNR staff can help develop a plan for this at no charge as a part of the project.

In collaboration with other grants, such as State brownfield programs, the program can seriously reduce local expenses in addressing derelict buildings. The City or County must own or have an ownership interest or be able to gain interest in the building by the time the grant application is due on February 28, 2014. Up to \$50,000 is available for each project.

Please contact the NIACOG office as soon as possible to discuss the potential for this program in your community and to start the application process. The application forms and other information can be found at:

[www.iowadnr.gov/environment/landstewardship/wastemanagement/derelictbuildingprogram.aspx](http://www.iowadnr.gov/environment/landstewardship/wastemanagement/derelictbuildingprogram.aspx)

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## RLF FUNDS AVAILABLE



NIACOG fully obligated its Revolving Loan Fund earlier this year, but through repayments, the fund now has approximately \$60,000 available for lending. If you know of a company in your area that is looking to expand and create new jobs, they may be eligible for funding through the NIACOG RLF program. This is a great gap financing tool for companies trying to finance an expansion plan. Funding is limited to industrial expansions and applicants must be from the NIACOG eight-county region. For more information, please contact the NIACOG office.

## IOWA BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN LONG-RANGE PLAN

Walking and biking are proven ways to improve the quality of life for all of us, providing healthy alternatives for people to get where they need to go. Many Iowans have embraced bicycling and walking for both recreation and daily transportation. Iowa's extensive trails system continues to evolve and recreational events such as Iowa's RAGBRAI event each July continues to grow in popularity.



Moving forward, the Iowa DOT has made a commitment to develop a Bicycle and Pedestrian Long-Range Plan to expand opportunities and further improve conditions for bicycling and walking across the state.



This plan will build upon the Iowa DOT's long-range strategy for multimodal transportation over the next three decades, *Iowa in Motion – Planning Ahead 2040*. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Long-Range Plan has three key objectives: Align with national best practices, including the federal transportation funding bill called Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century and national guidelines for trail development. Develop a list of priorities to expand the trails system between and within cities. Help state and local agencies to put the plan in place by providing tools for funding and design.

Upon its completion, this plan will serve as the primary guide for statewide decision-making regarding bicycle and pedestrian programs and facilities, including sidewalks, trails, bike lanes, paved shoulders, and other trail elements. It will also help achieve a better level of statewide coordination and continuity for all levels of bicycle and pedestrian mobility through regional, county, and city plans and programs.

## MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING

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

- **Franklin County** – Local jurisdictions have reviewed the 1<sup>st</sup> draft and it is currently being reviewed by FEMA.
- **Worth County** – Local jurisdictions have reviewed the 1<sup>st</sup> draft and revisions on 1<sup>st</sup> draft are being reviewed by FEMA.
- **Hancock County** – 1<sup>st</sup> draft is being reviewed by FEMA and local jurisdictions.
- **Mitchell County** – Initial meetings for 6 out of 8 cities have been conducted and 1<sup>st</sup> draft is being prepared for submittal to Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management in January 2014.

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

SEASONS GREETINGS



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HAPPY HOLIDAYS

From all the NIACOG STAFF



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**CALANDER OF EVENT**



**December**

- 9<sup>th</sup> – NIACOG Executive Committee Meeting,  
 NIACOG Office 12:00pm (Noon)
- 25<sup>th</sup> – Christmas – NIACOG Office Closed

**January**

- 1<sup>st</sup> – New Year’s Day – NIACOG Office Closed
- 8<sup>th</sup> – Hazmat Meeting – NIACOG Office, 1:30pm
- 8<sup>th</sup> – Transportation Policy Board Meeting  
 NIACOG Office, 2:30pm
- 13<sup>th</sup> – NIACOG Board of Director’s Meeting  
 Bennigan’s Grill, Clear Lake, 7:00pm
- 17<sup>th</sup> – North Iowa City Clerks’ Meeting  
 NIACOG Office, 9:30am

centers, vocational workshops and other community services such as stormwater projects

NIACOG prepares CDBG grants at no cost to its member governments. If you have a project in mind or have questions, please contact the NIACOG office.

**CDBG DEADLINE FAST APPROACHING**

If you are interested in applying for a CDBG community facilities and service fund grant, and you have not yet contacted us, please do so immediately. The application deadline is January 15<sup>th</sup>. The community facilities and services fund offers grants to assist communities for a variety of projects including day care facilities, senior

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