

The Update

January 2026

Serving the Counties of Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Montgomery, Mills, Page, Pottawattamie, and Shelby



SWITA Awarded \$50,000 to Improve Access to Healthcare

COUNCIL BLUFFS- Transportation can often be a barrier to accessing healthcare. To help address this, Southwest Iowa Transit Agency (SWITA) will soon launch a pilot program in partnership with Methodist Jennie Edmundson and CHI Mercy hospitals in Council Bluffs called SWI-Ride. This new program is intended to aid transportation to and from scheduled medical appointments with healthcare providers at these two hospitals. The Iowa Department of Transportation has awarded a \$50,000 State Transit Assistance Special Project grant to SWITA to help with scaling up the pilot program.



“Reliable transportation is one of the most common—and most challenging—barriers our patients face when trying to access care,” said Tara Slevin, President of the Jennie Edmundson Foundation. “We see firsthand how difficult it can be for individuals to get to scheduled appointments, particularly when financial constraints limit their options. Our partnership with SWITA and CHI Mercy Hospital reflects a shared commitment to addressing that challenge. This State Transit Assistance grant, secured by SWITA, is an incredible step forward in helping bridge transportation gaps and

expanding reliable access to care for patients across Pottawattamie and Mills Counties.” SWI-Ride seeks to provide a transportation option for patients that have barriers identified by healthcare partners to ensure they have access to their medical appointments. The launch is tentatively set for mid-February and will operate Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. It will initially be limited to rides within Pottawattamie and Mills Counties.

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In this Issue

SWITA Awarded \$50,000 to Improve Access to Healthcare; SWITA by the Numbers.....	1-2
Homes for Iowa Homes Delivered to Anita.....	3
SWIPCO and SWITA Participate in Cass County Festival of Trees.....	4
Birthdays & Anniversaries; SWIHTF HOA Open.....	5
From the Desk of the Executive Director.....	6

Health Care Transportation Continued...

SWITA, Methodist Jennie Edmundson Hospital, and CHI Mercy Hospital are providing matching funds over and above the \$50,000 state grant to start the program.

SWITA is based in Atlantic and has a vehicle hub in Council Bluffs and serves 8 counties in South-west Iowa with over 100 vehicles and approximately 70 drivers. It is Iowa's largest rural public transit service in terms of the total number of rides provided each year, averaging 550,000 rides annually and growing.

To find out more about SWITA and the services offered you can browse SWITA.com or call 800-842-8065 or 712-243-2518. Follow us on Facebook for regular updates as well.



SWITA by the Numbers

	November 2025	YTD (Since July 1)	December 2025	YTD (Since July 1)
Total Miles	147,360	837,193	162,536	999,729
Total Hours	8,044	45,850	8,861	54,711
Total Rides	41,580	216,656	42,976	259,632

November Rides by Service

Workforce Rides	8,149
Taxi Rides	4,633
Student Rides	6,335
Other	22,463

December Rides by Service

Workforce Rides	8,144
Taxi Rides	5,600
Student Rides	6,239
Other	22,993

November Rides by Demographic

Disabled	20,718
Elderly	2,176
Other General Public	18,686

December Rides by Demographic

Disabled	20,923
Elderly	2,562
Other General Public	19,491

Two New Homes Set to be Placed in Anita from Homes for Iowa Program

ANITA – The Anita Development Corporation accepted a recent delivery of a new home from the Homes for Iowa program to be placed in The Meadows development in Anita, with a second home on the way.

Anita Development Corporation partnered with SWIPCO, the Cass County Board of Supervisors, the Cass-Atlantic Development Corporation, and The City of Anita to spring this housing development to life at the site of a former trailer park on Sun Valley Road. The first home that was delivered was a three bedroom, two bathroom layout containing 1,200 square feet of living space. The house is being set on a crawlspace foundation and a double-car garage will be added to the site along with a paved driveway before being sold. Another home with the same specs is being delivered soon for placement on another lot in the development.



New Homes for Iowa house being delivered to Anita for The Meadows housing development

Homes for Iowa is a nonprofit partnership with Iowa Prison Industries that trains incarcerated individuals in the building trades, giving them practical experience by building homes onsite at the Newton Correctional Release Facility. Those homes are ordered or bought by various entities seeking housing options and delivered directly onto the foundation on the buyer's lot. Revenues received from the sale of homes is put back into the program to pay for training. The program helps offenders gain valuable skills that may help them obtain employment following their release. Even those who don't remain in the trades after release, benefit from the structure and sense of achievement they gain.

SWIPCO served as a liaison between Homes for Iowa and Anita Development Corporation to bring these homes to the community and also recently assisted with a home delivered to the City of Maseena. The program has since transitioned to work directly with housing partners, but SWIPCO would be happy to help any interested parties get connected with Homes for Iowa representatives.

Homes for Iowa reached a major milestone earlier this year with their 150th modular home built and delivered to Mason City. Find out more information on the program and check out the variety of home options at www.homesforia.com

SWIPCO and SWITA Participate in 2025 Cass County Festival of Trees

ATLANTIC -- Southwest Iowa Planning Council (SWIPCO) and Southwest Iowa Transit Agency participated in the 2025 Cass County Festival of Trees in early December. The event brings some holiday spirit to area residents while raising funds to battle cancer through the Cass County Relay for Life chapter.

The event this year was held at the Jazzercise building in downtown Atlantic. Nearly 1,000 visitors came through to see decorated trees from many area business and organizations and the event raised over \$4,000 to battle cancer in the region.

SWIPCO and SWITA are proud to support this annual event and cause.



SWITA and SWIPCO Trees at the 2025 Cass County Festival of Trees

Birthdays & Anniversaries

**Tracy Clark**

Transit Scheduler III
Birthday Month

**Mark Hansen**

Fleet Mechanic
Birthday Month

**Nicole Rhodes**

Grants Specialist II
Birthday Month

**Barb Boggs**

Grants Specialist I
Birthday Month

**Rhonda Brown**

Finance Manager
Birthday Month

**Mike Ballinger**

Safety Coordinator
Birthday Month



The SWIHTF Homeownership Assistance program opened for 2026 on January 2nd. These funds can help income eligible individuals purchase a new or existing home. Assistance is 7% of the purchase price, up to \$8,000. The first \$5,000 is a 5-year forgivable loan, forgiven 20% per year. Any amount over that is optional and repayable at a 1% interest rate over a maximum 5-year period. **Homebuyers must submit a signed purchase agreement with their application and will be selected on a first approved-first served basis.** To obtain an application visit <https://www.swipco.org/housing-swihtf/funding-sources-dashboard/> or contact the SWIPCO Housing Department at 712-243-4196

Upcoming Grant

Information:

- IDOT Speed Feedback Signs Program
Opens Jan.1st until exhausted
- Keep Iowa Beautiful Paint Iowa
February 12, 2026
- AARP Community Challenge Grants
March 4, 2026
- 2026 Land and Water Conservation Fund
March 6, 2026
- Iowa Rural Heritage Revitalization Grant
March 6, 2026
- CDBG Water and Sewer Program
Early 2026

From the Desk of the Executive Director...

John McCurdy

HEY LEGISLATORS!

First of all, if you're reading this, THANK YOU! At this time of year you are inundated with requests, pamphlets, emails, letters, and everything else, so if you are taking the time to pick up our newsletter to stay informed on what is happening at SWIPCO, we greatly appreciate it.

Second, keep an eye out for the budget line item in the state legislature for assistance to councils of governments (COGs). There are 17 COGs in Iowa, of which SWIPCO is one. We do a variety of things and are by no means the same, but we really are one of the few entities that regionalize government services (SWITA is a great example, it makes no sense for one county to run a transit system, but 8 together works really well) and in this time of budget cutting and looking for economies, COGs stand ready to help make as much sharing as possible—with the participation and consent of our members, the Cities and Counties of Southwest Iowa.

6,602

That's the number of telephone calls fielded by the transit staff in November. That includes clients calling to set up rides, or to cancel, drivers calling in, and all the wide variety of things that are handled in a given day. Of those calls, 4,558 were to the Atlantic taxi service alone. In total, that was over 100 hours spent simply on the phone. Each one of those calls is important, and each one represents an opportunity to improve someone's quality of life in our region. Great job transit managing all of that!

GRANTS

This is a gentle reminder that we are more than happy to help our members with grant writing services—we do it all the time. Usually that is free, sometimes we do have to charge for more complex programs, especially if they require a community survey or special study before they can be completed. We are coming into a very busy season of grant writing and we strongly encourage you to reach out now if you want that assistance so we can get you on the calendar.

SWIPCO STAFF			
John McCurdy, AICP Executive Director	Kersten Abild Transit Scheduler II	Tracy Clark Transit Scheduler III	Matthew Lee Building Inspector II
Mark Lander Transit Director	Ann Anstey Housing Programs Coordinator	Tammy DeBord Grants Specialist III	Chris Parks Communications Coordinator
Daurine Petersen Administrative Services Director	Mary Auten Grants Specialist I	Mark Hansen Fleet Mechanic	Nicole Rhodes Grants Specialist II
Rhonda Brown Finance Manager	Michael Ballinger Safety Coordinator	Ashley Hayes Disaster Recovery Coordinator	Phil Richter Building Inspector I
Brandie McFarland Human Resources Specialist	Barb Boggs Grants Specialist I	Julie Hays Transit Scheduler I	Kyle Rock Maintenance Assistant
	Dani Briggs Lead Planner	Dee Holtz Administrative Assistant	Kristen Templeton Transit Coordinator
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