



## UPPER-STORY HOUSING PILOT PROJECT

As reported in the Spring of 2018 edition of RPC Newsline, the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) has begun the process of updating its five-year consolidated plan for housing and community development which determines how the organization distributes its CDBG funding allocation. IEDA awarded pilot projects for upper-story housing rehabilitation to Ottumwa and Grundy Center to test out the potential for including downtown housing rehabilitation as an eligible activity in its annual housing fund. The RPC is administering the Ottumwa award (\$500,000).



303 E. Main—Before demo  
Under Construction



The project is creating five new rental housing units in downtown Ottumwa through the rehabilitation of vacant second stories of four mixed-use buildings (303, 305, 315, & 320 E. Main St.). This project has progressed quite rapidly, with construction well underway. The grant was awarded in late-March, designs were finalized in April, Section 106 (historic) review was completed in June, the environmental review was completed in July, release of funds was granted in August, bids for construction were accepted in September, and the contract for construction was awarded in October.

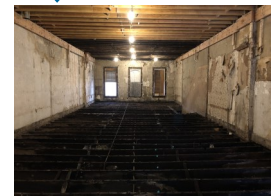
As the “before” photos affirm, these upper-story areas were in very poor condition. Three of the four properties (303, 305, & 320) had participated in the 2013 CDBG façade program, which had helped to stabilize portions of these properties. The 320 property had been gutted and partially rehabilitated in 2017, but 303 and 305 had only received new roofs since the façade project. Interior

demolition is complete on each of these buildings, with framing complete on 305 and 320. During demolition, the rear wall of 303 was discovered to be in worse condition than expected, so the rear wall will have to be rebuilt completely.

The fourth building (315) had been vacated in 2008—and likely had a leaky roof before then. Five-gallon buckets and plastic swimming pools had been collecting water for years, overflowing onto the floor and to the space below. Broken windows allowed pigeons to roost in the building. The upper-level interior was demolished completely in December and a roof was installed in January. The new sub-floor and framing also began in January. All of these apartments are slated for completion by August, but they should be done much sooner if the contractors maintain this pace!



315 E. Main—Before  
Demo Underway



### CDBG Water and Sewer Project Updates

The City of Keswick completed replacement of their water system and their affiliated CDBG project closed in Dec.

The City of Bloomfield was awarded a \$600,000 grant in December for water and sewer system improvements.

Area 15 RPC submitted a CDBG application for the City of Sigourney for water treatment system improvements in January, with award announcements planned for March.

There are three CDBG Water and Sewer grant cycles left in 2019: **April 1, July 1, and October 1.** If your city is preparing for water and/or sewer system improvements call Area 15 RPC to begin planning for a CDBG application.

## OTTUMWA PHASE II FAÇADE PROJECT UPDATE

The Phase II Ottumwa Façade Improvement Project is complete! The project included the renovation of 21 façades on 13 buildings utilizing a Downtown Revitalization Community Development Block Grant (CDBG-DTR) as well as a Main Street Iowa Challenge Grant. Construction for all buildings was substantially complete at the end of December, and the project should be fully closed out by the end of February. While nearly all the buildings got stark facelifts; just a few of the biggest changes are highlighted in the before/after photos found below.

Like the 2016 Oskaloosa project, the planning process for this Ottumwa project began early in 2015. A CDBG-DTR application was submitted and awarded in 2016, bids were received in mid-2017, and the construction process for this project was complete in about 18 months. This was undoubtedly the most aggressive façade project that the RPC has endeavored, but the results are stunning! The total process for a DTR project from concept to completion typically is 3.5 to 5 years, so if you think your community has downtown rehabilitation needs, contact us now to get started!



## REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENTS (REDI) UPDATE

REDI Inc. is excited to announce a new business project: [Camp365](#) is a Minneapolis area based company that plans to expand and locate a new production facility in the Albia Industrial Park.



CAMP365 will produce a new advanced fold-up camper. Referred to as the “cabin that goes anywhere”, it unfolds to a 700 cubic foot space which can even be hauled by car or ATV. Its advantage is its compact size, year-round use, and ability to set up in minutes by one person. See how it works at [www.camp365.com](http://www.camp365.com). The company plans to start production in a leased building in Albia while new construction begins on a new \$1.2 million 25,000 square foot production facility. The company will initially employ 10 people and up to 150 at full production. Other partners in the project include Albia Industrial Development Corporation, [Southern Iowa Electric Cooperative](#), [Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative](#), [Community 1st Credit Union](#), and [Iowa Economic Development Authority](#).

REDI Inc. is a non-profit organization formed in 1991 offering business loans for new and existing companies to create and retain jobs for the region. REDI has made over \$6 million in loans for over 1,800 jobs.

## KEOKUK CO. COMPLETES HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

The multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan update for Keokuk County has been reviewed and accepted by Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management (IHSEM) and FEMA. The plan was formally adopted by the Keokuk County Board of Supervisors in December. Area 15 staff are finalizing close-out activities and the grant should be closed out by the end of January. The plan is available for review on the RPC website. Discussions and planning has begun with Wapello County officials to prepare for their Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.

It is important that each community remembers that these plans are only as good as the information that is in them. Add newspaper clippings, photos of storm damages, and other notes regarding natural hazard events to the appendix. Future plan updates are much more accurate and less difficult to complete if they have been reviewed and appended regularly. In addition, any information added to the plan can assist with hazard mitigation assistance (HMA) grant applications. A county, community, or school must have a current, adopted hazard mitigation plan to be eligible for these funds.

## AHEAD RHTF announces 2019 funding

The AHEAD Regional Housing Trust Fund was recently awarded \$302,525 from the Iowa Finance Authority for 2019! Local cash match of \$75,631 brings the total project to \$378,156. With this announcement, AHEAD RHTF will continue to offer its program and accept applications for owner and rental housing construction and improvements in 2019! Most common use of the program is by homeowners seeking repairs such as roofs, plumbing, electric, heating, and air conditioning. Other eligible uses are for new construction (and rehabilitation) of owner and rental units, and tenant-based rental assistance. This program must benefit families at or below Iowa's low to moderate income limits. AHEAD RHTF serves the area of Davis, Jefferson, Keokuk, Mahaska, Van Buren, and Wapello counties. Applications and guidelines available at [www.area15rpc.com/rhtf](http://www.area15rpc.com/rhtf).

### • BASIC HOME REPAIR

- ROOFS, WINDOWS, SIDING, DOORS
- BATHROOM, KITCHEN, BASEMENT



### • ELECTRICAL/PLUMBING REPAIR

- WATER HEATER, ELECTRICAL SERVICE UPGRADES
- REPAIR/REPLACE WATER/SEWER LINES



## HOME REPAIR LOANS TO HOUSEHOLDS MAKING LESS THAN \$58,480 PER YEAR!

### Eligibility requirements

- Projects must serve households at or below 80% of Iowa Finance Authority's Median Family Income (MFI) guidelines.
- Proof of property ownership (DEED) must be verifiable through your County Assessor's office.
- Property taxes & mortgage payments must be current/paid-to-date. Property must be clear of any mechanics liens or encumbrances.
- Housing unit must have assessed value of \$20,000 or greater. Up to 25% minimum equity may be required.



### • HEATING/COOLING

- REPAIR/REPLACE FURNACE, BOILER
- AIR CONDITIONING/VENTILATION



### • ACCESSIBILITY

- EXTERIOR RAMPS, ACCOMMODATIONS
- BATHROOM/KITCHEN UPGRADES

LOW INTEREST! 0%,1%,2% MONTHLY PAYMENTS –OR– DEFERRED LOANS

## New Housing for Rural Iowa—Iowa Prison Industries

A program to build new affordable housing in rural Iowa is taking shape this year with help from Iowa's Councils of Government and the Iowa Prison Industry. The proposal, based on South Dakota's Governor's Housing program, is to use prison labor to build new stick-built homes and sell to income-eligible families and locate anywhere in the state. The program has several goals: 1) provide communities with new workforce housing stock at price points the market does not provide; 2) provide low-risk offenders with apprenticeships and job skills that are in demand state-wide; and 3) positively impact ex-offenders, their families and communities, and the state budget with decreased repeat-offenders (proven to be up to 35% in South Dakota for graduates of the program). Iowa Prison Industry will begin work to build a security fence at the Newton Correctional Facility this year and start construction of two homes this year. The goal in the next five years is to get up to full production of 100 homes per year. Homes will be 1200 square feet, 3 bedroom, 1 ½ bath. Other improvements such as basement, garage, drive, etc. may be added by the owner. Sales of the homes are planned to be made through a non-profit organization and councils of government such as Area 15 Regional Planning Commission. RPC looks forward to promoting this program in the future and helping add new homes to our communities. If interested in more information please contact Chris Bowers or Matt Naumann at (641) 684-6551.



## AREA 15 PROVIDES RECODIFICATION SERVICES TO CITIES

The Area 15 Regional Planning Commission has over 20 years' experience in providing codification services to cities within the region. In the past five years the RPC has updated the city code for 22 of the 50 cities within the region.

To provide codification service, the RPC maintains a model code of ordinances. This code is updated annually by an attorney and includes the most recent changes to the Iowa code and legal opinions and precedents set in Iowa Courts. RPC staff use this model to create and update a Code of Ordinances for a city. Chapters from the model code may be added or removed from the city's code depending on the individual city's needs. Special ordinances specific to a city; such as franchise ordinances, water and sewer are added and updated based on the city's latest ordinances and amendments.

Iowa Code section 380.8 requires cities to have and maintain a Code of Ordinances. To maintain their code, a city may: a) compiling a supplement at least annually consisting of all ordinances and amendments from the previous year and adopting the supplement by resolution, b) adding new ordinances and amendments at least annually to the code itself, c) if the city does not



## AREA 15 PROVIDES RECODIFICATION SERVICES TO CITIES CONT.

maintain its code as described in a or b then it shall compile a Code of Ordinances at least every five years.

Codification services provided by the Area 15 RPC are on a contractual basis. To update a city's code, RPC staff will work with the city clerk to prepare a new draft code using the RPC's model code and information from the city's current code. This new draft code will be provided to the city for review, after the city has completed its review, RPC staff will discuss any additional revisions the city would like to make. The RPC will then prepare a final draft incorporating any revisions identified along with providing instructions for adoption to the city clerk.

If your city is interested in the RPCs codification services, contact Chris Kukla at [Chris.Kukla@area15rpc.com](mailto:Chris.Kukla@area15rpc.com) or (641) 684-6551.

## RPC HELPS ORGANIZATIONS LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Area 15 RPC staff recently completed a strategic planning effort with the Wapello County Historical Museum to guide the museum's focus over the next three years. Working with Regional Planner Holly Berg, a scope of work was developed to empower the museum board to be a strong, efficient, and productive organization and equip the museum with the knowledge and skills to improve museum operations and drive increased visitation and community engagement.

Holly identified primary goals for the museum and led the Board of Directors through the formation of new mission and vision statements, development of a 3-year strategic plan, and updates to board by-laws and museum collections policies. Final recommendations were presented to the board in January for adoption.

The project has already spurred new efforts at the museum, including the hiring of their first full-time director, Dr. Rick Woten, to help accomplish their ambitious plans. With this project concluded, Area 15 RPC staff are continuing their strategic efforts with other organizations—next beginning work with Ottumwa's Video Game Capital of the World Museum.



Dr. Rick Woten

If your board or organization could benefit from strategic planning assistance, contact Area 15 RPC to discuss how we can help!

## TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM APPLICATIONS—APRIL 1

The Area 15 Regional Planning Commission is now accepting application for the Transportation Alternative Program for the 5-county region that includes Jefferson, Keokuk, Mahaska, Van Buren and Wapello Counties. Eligible applicants include city and county governments within the region as well as persons, businesses or organizations sponsored by a government.

Funding is available for federal fiscal years 2020 through 2023 and may be used for the bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and safety improvements, safe routes to school projects, scenic highway turnouts and overlooks and historic preservation of transportation related structures. It is anticipated that there will be approximately \$500,000 available for projects. Projects must have a minimum cost of at least \$20,000 to be eligible and there is a minimum 20% match requirement for the Transportation Alternatives Program funds. Projects should be generally ready to proceed with construction prior to applying: a concept statement should be developed, property or easements acquired, and other funding sources identified.

After a project is awarded funding by the RPA, it will be able to start in October or November of the federal fiscal year it is programmed if all of the plans have been submitted to and approved by the Iowa Department of Transportation. Projects should not start before receiving approval from the Iowa DOT, any activities undertaken before receiving this will not be eligible for reimbursement. Funding is provided on a reimbursement basis, costs have be incurred and documentation provided to the Iowa DOT before the applicant can receive the grant funds.

Information on eligible activities, application requirements and the application are available on the Area 15 RPC website at: <https://www.area15rpc.com/transportation-alternatives-program-1> Applications are due April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

If you have questions, please contact Chris Kukla at [Chris.Kukla@area15rpc.com](mailto:Chris.Kukla@area15rpc.com) or (641) 684-6551.

## AHEAD FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER LOAN PROGRAM

The Southern Iowa Homeownership (SIHO) program provides up-to **\$10,000** down-payment and closing assistance to first-time homebuyers employed in our ten-county region. Eligible housing units must be located inside the city limits of an incorporated city. Visit [www.area15rpc.com](http://www.area15rpc.com) or call Matt at 641.684.6551 for more information.

## OPPORTUNITY<sup>2</sup> HIGHLIGHTING MANUFACTURING IN OUR REGION

As part of a recent Iowa Economic Development Authority regional marketing grant, the Opportunity<sup>2</sup> economic development group focused on publicizing the strength of manufacturing in the region. Each county representative worked with a professional writer to develop content to be used in promotional materials. As part of these efforts, the Area 15 RPC newsletters continue to feature an excerpt each newsletter from the project.

### Jefferson County: Manufacturing Inspiration

With a tendency toward the health markets, manufacturing in Jefferson County is an eclectic mix of entrepreneurial enterprises. The focus on catering to the healthy living movements has inspired manufacturers like Spring Sunrise Ghee, producers of clarified butter, and SkyFactory, producing evidence-based healthcare art. Fairfield is a place where traditional smokestack manufacturing coexists with creative industries, and foodpreneurs. Companies like Shaktea, brewers of organic Kombucha, and the 25-year-old Radiance Dairy, make Jefferson County a place that takes to market products and produce that inspire consumers to eat better, feel better, and live better lives.

There is an ever-growing number of successful manufacturers in the area focusing on sustainability and overall improvement. Bubbling Brine Brothers (BBB), thanks to the help of an award from the Fairfield Economic Development Association (FEDA) received in 2014, distributes fermented food like sauerkraut to stores all around Iowa. Owner Noah Loin says, "the trend of health-related probiotics is only continuing to grow." BBB has "expansion in motion including more stores, food co-ops, restaurants, and other Iowa avenues." The production of organic goods, from fresh produce to value-added products, has seen an increase of approximately 20 new products in the last year in Jefferson County. New Bounty Foods, appealing to an overall trend towards convenience, carved out a niche market producing organic fresh foods described as "ready to heat, ready to eat."



## USDA—RURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANT

USDA Rural Development is currently accepting applications for the FY 2019 Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) program. The application deadline is Friday, March 29th. The RBDG program supports targeted technical assistance and training to develop or expand small and emerging private businesses in rural communities or areas. Entities and organizations including communities, state agencies, nonprofit corporations, rural cooperatives, higher learning institutions, rural cooperatives and federally recognized tribes are eligible to apply for program funding. Grant funds may be used for such activities as project planning, business counseling/training, technical assistance, market research, feasibility studies, professional and technical reports or product/service improvements. They may also be used to help acquire or develop land, construct or renovate buildings, establish revolving loans funds, community economic development planning, establish rural business incubators and leadership and entrepreneur training. Applications are evaluated on such criteria as job creation to occur with local businesses, economic need in the area to be served, and consistency with local economic development priorities. This is a competitive grant program with limited funding available. We do encourage applicants to be conservative in their requests and leverage project costs with funds from multiple sources. More information on USDA Rural Development's Rural Business Development Grant program can be found at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants/ia> or my contact information is below if you need to discuss a potential project and obtain an application package.

## DIRECTORY CORRECTIONS

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Martinsburg Mayor: Mike Jasper

Delta email: deltaia@windstream.net

### CONTACT US

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Mike Hadley, Chairperson** (Keokuk Co.)  
**Lee Dimmitt, Vice-Chair** (Jefferson Co.)  
**Bryan Ziegler, Treasurer** (SBDC)  
**Matt Greiner** (Davis Co.)  
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**Mark Gronendyk** (Mahaska Co.)  
**Dale House** (Van Buren Co.)  
**Terry Hollingsworth** (Sigourney)  
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**Donnie Garrett** (Private Sector)  
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