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WINTER 2017



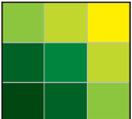
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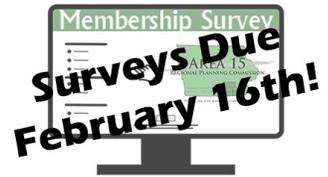
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AREA 15 RPC WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Area 15 is currently conducting an annual survey of our member cities and counties. Understanding current needs and upcoming projects allows RPC to know how best to assist our members with project planning and funding. Information gained from the survey will be used to identify key projects and the direction of the RPC for the coming year. A link to the survey can also be found at www.area15rpc.com. Please submit your survey by February 16th.



AHEAD RHTF announces 2018 funding

The AHEAD Regional Housing Trust Fund was recently awarded \$302,525 from the Iowa Finance Authority for 2018! 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 2018! 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.



AHEAD RHTF was formed in 2011 and is funded by the State of Iowa through the Iowa Finance Authority. Funds have been appropriated annually by the Iowa Legislature to help improve Iowa's housing stock. The program is used 100% to benefit families that meet low to moderate income limits. Funds received for 2018 are expected to help improve at least 29 owner-occupied homes. AHEAD RHTF serves the area of Davis, Jefferson, Keokuk, Mahaska, Van Buren, and Wapello counties. The group has received over \$1.4 million in funds since 2011 and provided assistance to 811 households. Area 15 RPC is the administrator of this program. Applications and guidelines available at www.area15rpc.com/rhtf.

RPC PROVIDES PLANNING ASSISTANCE TO MAASDAM BARN



Mare barn at Maasdam

Quality of life offerings, such as libraries, museums, and other attractions are the heart of a community and play a key role in our region’s economic development. Ensuring these facilities are functioning at their best is vital for an attractive and inviting community not just to tourists, but potential new residents, entrepreneurs, and businesses.

The Maasdam Barns Preservation Committee, an entirely volunteer run organization, undertook a significant task in 2005 to restore the historic Maasdam Barns and develop the site as a new tourism attraction for the area. With an impressive amount of restoration work and museum exhibits completed, the committee looked towards what was next for their group to tackle. Area 15 RPC Regional Planner Holly Berg’s experience in

museum administration, tourism development, and strategic planning was a great fit to provide the group with the knowhow to address their needs.

Through conversations with the executive board, meetings with local tourism staff, review of the committee’s by-laws and policies, and several site visits, Holly developed an in-depth understanding of the organization. This familiarity with the site allowed for an engaging and constructive SWOT analysis with the organization’s Board of Directors and volunteers. Holly was able to provide the committee a solid framework to advance their historic site through the development of a new mission and vision statement, first ever strategic plan and updated by-laws. All documents were provided for review by the board and ready for their future adoption. The planning process and resulting resources can now serve as a guide for the committee’s direction.



SWOT analysis help prioritize needs/wants

Tourism and museum planning services are available to organizations in all of RPC’s member communities. Contact Holly at 641.8148402 or holly.berg@area15rpc.com for more information!

CITY CODIFICATION SERVICE AVAILABLE TO RPC MEMBERS

Section 380.8 of the Code of Iowa requires cities to have and maintain a Code of Ordinances containing all city ordinances except for grade ordinances, bond ordinances, zoning map ordinances, ordinances vacating streets and alleys, and ordinances containing legal descriptions of urban revitalization areas or urban renewal areas. To maintain a Code of Ordinances a city may update their code with a supplement containing new amendments and ordinances or insert these items directly into the code, either of which must be done at least annually. Cities that do not maintain their code as described above must codify a Code of Ordinances at least every 5 years.

The RPC has 25+ years’ experience in providing codification services. In the past five years we have updated 20 city codes within our region. RPC works with other Councils of Government in Iowa to maintain a “model code” of ordinances that is updated annually by an Iowa municipal attorney and includes the most recent changes to the Iowa Code as well as legal opinions and precedents set in Iowa Courts. Special ordinances specific to a city; such as franchise ordinances, water, and sewer can be added, but are generally not altered.

Codification services are provided on a contractual basis. RPC will work with the city to prepare a new draft code using the RPC’s model code and information from the city’s current code. This draft code will be provided to the city for review, after the city has completed its review, RPC staff can discuss any additional revisions the city would like to make. RPC will then prepare a final draft incorporating any revisions identified along with instructions for adoption to the city clerk. If your city is interested in codification services, contact Chris Kukla at chris.kukla@area15rpc.com or (641) 684-6551.

OPPORTUNITY² HIGHLIGHTS MANUFACTURING IN THE REGION

As part of a recent Iowa Economic Development Authority regional marketing grant, the Opportunity² economic development group focused on publicizing the strength of manufacturing in the region. Each county representative worked with a professional writer to develop content for promotional materials. As part of these efforts, Area 15 RPC Newline will feature an excerpt each newsletter from the project.

Keokuk County-Producing Fresh

Keokuk County might seem an unlikely location for Iowa Shrimp Farms LLC to set up an operation. Owners, Marc Bretz and Bill Thomasson, had a feel for the climate in Sigourney from opening a commercial warehousing operation, Sedna Warehousing, in the area. Choosing Sigourney, with the third owner of Iowa Shrimp Farms Craig Meacham, was an easy decision.

Thomasson says that Sigourney is a “superior distribution location. It is approximately one hour from both the markets of Des Moines and the Iowa City/Cedar Rapids corridor.” With fresh shrimp having a shelf life of less than four days, distance matters. He goes on to say that “Iowa continues to be an ideal warehousing distribution point with one-day transit to Chicago, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Omaha, Kansas City, and St. Louis.” The East and West Coasts are reachable in two to three days, making Sigourney a perfect central point. Right now, Iowa Shrimp Farms is producing 600 pounds monthly; looking forward, they plan to double the capacity to 1200 pounds a month within a year— a healthy haul to get to market.



Shrimp from Iowa? YES!

There is no doubt that shrimp is the most popular seafood in the world. Bypassing the need to purchase shrimp that has been frozen over six months time for a store or restaurant, and allowing consumers to have access to “fresh, all natural, local shrimp harvested and provided the same day,” is the mission of Iowa Shrimp Farms. With the local food movement growing all over the country, consumers want to know where food comes from. They are interested in the narrative, and have come to equate local food produced in Iowa with health, and superior taste. Thomasson says they’ve been at this project, getting ready for their first harvest, for three years. “Shrimp were abundant in Iowa about 300 million years ago. It’s been a long time coming, but worth the wait.”



BUSINESS & INDUSTRY LOANS AVAILABLE

Employers in our region can finance up to 33% of their project by accessing as much as **\$15,000** per job created (or retained) and finance that loan for up-to **10** years.

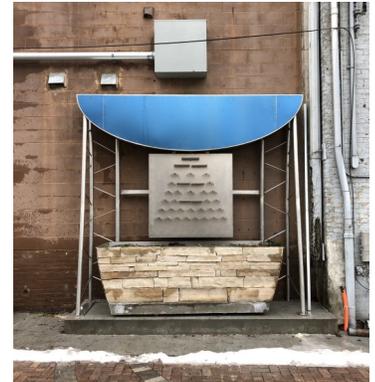
Regional Economic Development Investments (REDI) loans target industry/service sector employers including, but not limited to; light manufacturing, value-added production, service industries, new or emerging technologies, new applications of existing technologies: *Retail enterprises are not eligible for funding.* REDI funding can represent no more than 1/3 of total project financing. Borrower must maintain at least 10% equity. REDI requires a letter from a conventional private lender documenting the need for REDI funds as “gap financing”.

From “start-ups” to business expansion, REDI is available to help create/maintain employment opportunities in our region. **Program brochures and applications are available on our website: www.area15rpc.com.**

CANTEEN ALLEY PHASE II PROJECT COMPLETE

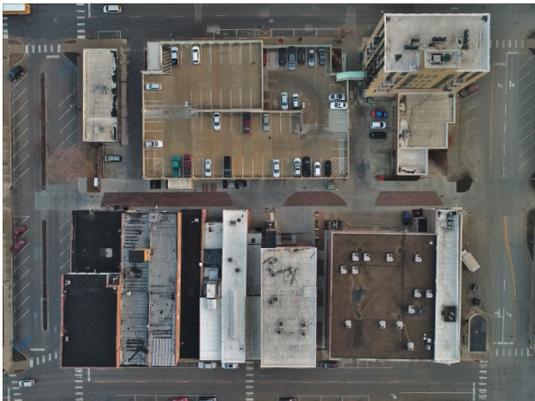
Since 1936, a nonchalant, single-story brick structure in a downtown Ottumwa alley has been home to Southeast Iowa’s most famous restaurant: *Canteen Lunch in the Alley*. [Fun fact: The Canteen served as the inspiration for the *Lanford Lunch Box* in the 1990s television sitcom, *Roseanne*.] Nestled beneath the Second Street Parking Ramp, the Canteen serves the “best loose meat sandwich in Iowa”, shakes, malts, and homemade pies. The modest, 840 square foot restaurant houses just seventeen stools around a U-shaped counter, but serves an astonishing 600 customers per day!

In 2000, the City formulated efforts to build a parking garage at the Canteen’s location, offering to purchase the building or move it to another site. The owners, residents, and the Canteen’s fans insisted that it remain in place, as is, and ultimately the parking ramp was built around the historic landmark! The charm of being located in an alley; however, has had its share of drawbacks. Among the most noticeable was the deteriorating pavement condition and the impact of storm water run-off from the rooves of the buildings abutting the alley. Inadequate storm drainage and potholes in the broken asphalt meant that water would remain in the alley for days after it rained—especially right outside of the Canteen’s entrance.



Traditional downspouts have been replaced with whimsical, yet fully functional, artwork to slow and disperse rainwater entering the alley.

The Ottumwa Regional Legacy Foundation hired *gēnus* Landscape Architects to develop a multi-phase concept for improving the conditions of “Canteen Alley”. Phase I, which was completed by the Legacy Foundation in the Winter of 2016, included renovation of the open space between buildings that links Main Street to Canteen Alley. Phase II, was a much larger project that completely rehabilitated the alley’s pavement and utility infrastructure between Court and Market Streets.



Arial view of “Canteen Alley” between South Court and Market Streets. Note permeable paver inlay.

With designs nearly complete, the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA), awarded the last bit of its 2008 flood disaster recovery funding to the Canteen Alley Phase II Storm Water Management Project in early 2017. The project included complete tear-out of existing pavement, excavation and installation of sub-grade water retention basins, new concrete with sections of permeable pavers, storm and sanitary sewer separation, water main upgrades, and lighting/utility relocation and upgrades. The project also included a new outdoor seating area for the Canteen, as well as two art pieces that integrate rain water

management. The nearly \$732,000 project was primarily funded with a \$543,000 CDBG from IEDA, as well as local funding from the City of Ottumwa, Ottumwa Regional Legacy Foundation, and a grant from Principal Financial Group. The project, completed in December, has established a cultural corridor at the doorstep of Ottumwa’s most famed destinations for tourists and residents alike.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

NOW IS THE TIME TO CONTACT RPC TO START PLANNING YOUR CDBG APPLICATION FOR WATER/SEWER OR COMMUNITY FACILITIES. IT CAN TAKE SEVERAL MONTHS TO GET AN APPLICATION READY, SO PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE **TODAY!**

DOWNTOWN REVITATIZATION PROJECTS UPDATE

Progress continues on the Oskaloosa and Ottumwa CDBG-DTR projects. The Oskaloosa project is over 60% complete, and should wrap up later in the spring. When this project is finished, twenty-four façades will have been rehabilitated on eighteen properties. The Ottumwa project, which started construction about six months after the Oskaloosa project, is nearing 20% completion and is expected to finish in the summer.



232 East Main before and during revitalization

As a reminder, the downtown revitalization fund is an annual CDBG program with applications for grants due in April. These grants take about a year to develop and require a downtown “slum and blight survey”, proper procurement for architectural work, and often architectural historian services *before* a grant can be submitted. Staff at IEDA have indicated that they will give preference to experienced grant administrators for DTR grants, as they are quite nuanced and require enhanced administrative oversight. If you are interested in the DTR program, please contact Bradley (641-814-8404) as soon as possible so that we can have ample time to develop your application in accordance with the grant’s requirements!

DNR GRANT CAN HELP CITIES CLEAN UP BUILDINGS

Iowa DNR’s Derelict Building Program offers financial assistance, to cities & counties with populations of 5,000 or fewer, to address neglected buildings and improving the appearance of their jurisdictions by deconstructing or renovating derelict buildings for future development and use. Eligible buildings must have been vacant for more than six months, The purpose of this program is to divert building materials away from landfills and towards reuse/recycling.

Eligible cities & counties may request funds for the following activities: asbestos inspection, removal/disposal of asbestos, structural engineering analysis, phase 1 and 2 site assessments, building deconstruction and building renovation. Detailed information on the Derelict Building Program including the amount of assistance available, can be found on the Iowa DNR’s website at: <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environmental-Protection/Land-Quality/Waste-Planning-Recycling/Derelict-Building-Program>

Applications due **April 4, 2018**, funding becomes available on July 1st, 2018.

The Area 15 RPC can provide assistance in preparing and submitting a grant application to the Derelict Building Program. If you have questions about the program, or are interested in assistance preparing an application, please contact Chris Kukla at Chris.Kukla@area15rpc.com or (641) 684-6551.

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2018 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS

Beginning last year, Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) accepts applications for **water and sewer projects** on a quarterly basis, all other CDBG applications are accepted once per year. See table below for 2018 application deadlines.

All new CDBG applications must follow the 2.CFR.200 procurement standard. This federal regulation affects the procurement of grant administrators, engineers, and architects. Communities should procure for ALL engineering and architectural services related to a project BEFORE applying for the grant. Preliminary design, final design, and construction management services now should be solicited at the same time through a single procurement process.

All applicant communities must identify a target population that meets or exceeds 51% Low-to-Moderate income. If a community is not eligible for a CDBG based on the 2006-2010 American Community Survey (Census) data, it may be eligible if a valid survey is completed and shows that the community is over 51% LMI. At a recent workshop, IEDA explained that new guidance from HUD has changed the survey process for determining a community's LMI percentage. Area 15 RPC staff offers LMI survey assistance to jurisdictions interested in applying for CDBG funding.

If your community has any intention of seeking CDBG funds for a project, please let Area 15 RPC know as soon as possible. Our staff can help guide you through the process start to finish—we can assist in determining if your community is eligible, procurement of services, application and administration of a CDBG. The key to a successful application is making sure the process starts out right, we are here to help!

2018 CDBG Application Deadlines	
Water/Sewer (Quarterly)	1 st of Jan, Apr, Aug, Oct.
Downtown Revitalization	April 27, 2018
Community Facilities	April 20, 2018
Housing	May 4, 2018

AHEAD FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER LOAN PROGRAM

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



IT'S A GIRL!

Congratulations to our Transportation Director, Chris Kukla and his wife Megan on the birth of their daughter Ezri Beth Kukla. Ezri was born December 29, 2017 at 1:26 p.m. She weighed in at a healthy 8 pounds and 9 ounces.



RPC offices were spared smoke/water damage from the fire that engulfed our neighbor—The Bridal Cottage on Saturday January 6, 2018.