



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SWIPCO Honors Partners at Annual Meeting in Walnut

*SWIPCO celebrates the work of the past year. Crouch and McClarnon named Ron Kohn
Servant Leadership Award Winners*

WALNUT- Southwest Iowa Planning Council (SWIPCO) hosted members, staff, and supporters for their Annual Meeting and Awards on Thursday, September 24th at the Walnut Community Center in Walnut. The gathering included partnership awards, annual report presentation, and the announcement of two Ron Kohn Servant Leadership Award winners.

SWIPCO celebrated another successful year of impact on Southwest Iowa. In Fiscal Year 2026, SWIPCO helped member communities and counties bring in nearly \$2.5 million worth of new grant funds, completed 3 major projects that included \$4.9 million worth of grant investment, rehabilitated 51 homes through 5 different funding programs, completed over 573 inspections, tackled numerous plans and codes, worked on numerous regional plans, amongst other impacts. Southwest Iowa Transit Agency provided 517,710 rides in FY26 getting residents to work, school, medical appointments, shopping, and more.

The Ron Kohn Servant Leadership Award was created to shine a light on leaders that go above and beyond to serve the people of the region. The award honors the legacy of the late Ron Kohn who was a Glenwood educator, Mayor, and Mills County Supervisor that led with tremendous selflessness. Five individuals were nominated for the award this year: Silver City Mayor Joseph Jaworski, President of the Hamburg Colonial Theatre Erica Stephens, Silver City City Clerk Cassandra Wilson, Mills County Supervisor Richard Crouch, and Clarinda City Manager Gary McClarnon. Each nominee was recognized for their work and ultimately two very deserving winners were selected, **Gary McClarnon** and **Richard Crouch**.

Gary McClarnon has spent more than two decades as the City Manager for the City of Clarinda and his leadership has played a pivotal role in improving infrastructure, fostering economic development, maintaining sound fiscal management, and improving the quality of life for Clarinda residents. Under his leadership the City of Clarinda has completed millions of dollars in public improvement projects, often multi-million within the same year.



Richard Crouch was first elected to the Mills County Board of Supervisors in 2002 and is currently finishing his sixth term. Since 2019 he has served as the NACo Board Representative for the Iowa State Association of Counties, carrying Mills County's voice to the national stage. Richard has been a strong force behind housing, broadband, disaster recovery, and economic development initiatives. Crouch has also been a dedicated volunteer for many organizations and activities throughout the region, including sixty years on the chain gang for Glenwood High School varsity football games.

SWIPCO also presented five partnership awards to individuals and organizations that aided successful impacts on SWIPCO and the Region.

Ashley Williams for her exceptional leadership and initiative as part of the Cass Health Occupational Health team to develop and implement job specific physical tests for SWIPCO/SWITA to ensure that employees can safely perform the tasks of their jobs, which helps improve workplace safety and the safety of the general public.

Kevin Benell, Benell Enterprises, for his team's work on numerous housing rehabilitation projects throughout seven counties. Kevin and his team have been valuable partners in helping Southwest Iowans in need get the home repairs that improve their quality of life and allow them to stay in their homes.

Travis Remmert, Travis Systems, for his help with providing vital software that helps SWIPCO and the Southwest Iowa Housing Trust Fund operate our housing programs. Travis has always been quick to respond to calls for assistance and tailored solutions directly to SWIPCO's needs.

Harry Adams, Mayor of Hamburg, for his valuable leadership as mayor of Hamburg post-flood, including finishing multiple complex federal grants and moving others forward even against extraordinary challenges.

Jennie Edmundson Hospital Foundation and CHI Health Foundation for their partnership on a new transportation program for SWITA called "SWI-Ride". This program aims to help those with a transportation barrier make it to medical and other appointments that are critical to the clients' quality of life.

SWIPCO is proud of another successful year of helping the region thrive and moving forward. SWIPCO, founded in 1975, is a council of governments serving eight counties in Southwest Iowa with public transportation, community development, and housing assistance. Counties served are Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie, and Shelby.

SWIPCO is an equal opportunity employer, provider, and lender.

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Photo Captions

- 1- Nominees and Winners of Ron Kohn Servant Leadership Award (L-R): SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy, Silver City City Clerk Cassandra Wilson, Silver City Mayor Joseph Jaworski, Joanne Kohn (Ron's Widow), Clarinda City Manager Gary McClarnon, Mills County Supervisor Richard Crouch (Not Pictured: President of the Hamburg Colonial Theatre Erica Stephens)
- 2- Clarinda City Manager Gary McClarnon (Right) receiving the Ron Kohn Servant Leadership Award from SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy
- 3- Mills County Supervisor Richard Crouch (Right) receiving the Ron Kohn Servant Leadership Award from SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy
- 4- SWIPCO Partnership Award (L-R): SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy, Ashley Williams
- 5- SWIPCO Partnership Award (L-R): SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy, Kevin Benell - Benell Enterprises, SWIPCO Building Inspector Matthew Lee
- 6- SWIPCO Partnership Award (L-R): SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy, Hamburg Mayor Harry Adams
- 7- SWIPCO Partnership Award (L-R): SWIPCO Executive Director John McCurdy; Amber Quigley, CHI Health Foundation; Tara Slevin, Jennie Edmundson Hospital Foundation; SWITA Transit Director Mark Lander