



Southwest Iowa Coalition, Inc.

- ❖ **1991 | The first meeting included 33 people from Shenandoah, Corning and Red Oak.**
- ❖ **1992 | An invitational, introductory meeting to the Coalition brought almost 75 people to Corning to discuss their common concerns.**
- ❖ **1993 – 1994 | grassroots recruiting effort of regional leaders brought an informal group of individuals together representing 14 counties.**
- ❖ **1994 | Dues paying membership in SWICO numbered almost 175.**
- ❖ **1995 to 1996 | A formalized approach to doing business began to evolve that included the writing of by-laws and articles of incorporation.**
- ❖ **The Grow Iowa Foundation, Inc.(GIF) was formed by SWICO in 1996 to bridge a common gap for financing business starts and conventional lending institutions.**
- ❖ **Today | SWICO continues to support local economic development leadership by providing a regional layer of advocacy and communications.**

A grassroots, membership-based, nonprofit, volunteer-driven rural development advocacy organization since 1991.



Agriculture

❖ Farm Bill

- Farm subsidy
- School lunch program
- Federal crop insurance
- Sustainable agriculture
- Health care costs



Transportation

- ❖ Hwy 34 bridge across the Missouri river is a major key to economic opportunity
- ❖ Urge passage of Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill
- ❖ Eliminate unnecessary programs and requirements
- ❖ Keep rural Iowa in mind for funding options
- ❖ SWICO is active supporter of TIME 21 funding on state level
- ❖ Federal funding is essential to make important projects happen



Housing

- ❖ **Aging Infrastructure 50% built before 1978-affecting rehabilitation and energy efficiency programs**
- ❖ **Lack of regulation/certification for rehabilitation-local control**
- ❖ **Updated data collection; e.g. flood plains**
- ❖ **Lack of syndication for tax credits in rural areas**
- ❖ **Increased regulation of mobile home parks/real estate**
- ❖ **Cost of new construction in rural areas**



Entrepreneurship

- ❖ **Suffered a huge loss of manufacturers in southwest Iowa**
- ❖ **Strategy since 2007: Rural Development Center (RDC)**
 - Regional Entrepreneurial Development Systems (EDS)
 - Primarily funded through ISU Extension and Rural Community Development Initiative grant through USDA – RD
- ❖ **The RDC**
 - Served 404 Clients | Resulting in 441 Projects
 - Cost recovered \$15,927.50 from fee generation from business planning services.
 - Generated \$2.8M in Business Loans.
 - Generated \$1M in Private Investments for Business Ventures.
 - Captured \$136K in Grants for Business Ventures.
- ❖ **Re-tooling the Center’s business structure with assistance from the Rural Policy Research Institute: Finding Report Substantiates:**
 - A need to better coordinate support services and resources,
 - Southwest Iowa’s economic resiliency is largely due to its culture of entrepreneurship,
 - Necessity entrepreneurship is increasing due to the lack of available jobs,
 - Nested between healthy metro areas of Omaha, Kansas City and Des Moines gives southwest Iowa a competitive edge to support emerging entrepreneurial ventures.
- ❖ **Federal Policy/Legislation Needed to Provide:**
 - Funds for planning, research and start-up capitalization for EDS’s is needed,
 - Flexibility to support EDS’s working with **all sizes** of ventures start-ups and expansions not just high growth to create a base of diverse businesses within communities for economic sustainability.



Local Foods

- ❖ **Economic Impacts on rural regions can be huge.**
 - Must nurture/develop a supply chain of new producers/growers.
 - Regional aggregation/processing centers is critical infrastructure necessary for producers to increase production so that the supply can meet urban market demands.
- ❖ **Growing fruit and vegetables within a 10-county area in southwest Iowa to supply a portion of the Omaha/Council Bluffs and Des Moines markets would: ¹**
 - fetch \$4.62 million in direct farm-level sales,
 - generate \$1.75 million in new labor income,
 - and create nearly 29 jobs for the region.
- ❖ **Research concludes: enough evidence for policy discussion to support local foods initiatives ²**
 - impacts correlated to external cost of the distribution of the food system, such as emissions, congestion, safety, and pavement deterioration costs.

¹ SOURCE: The Economic Impact of Fruit and Vegetable Production in Southwest Iowa Considering Local and Nearby Metropolitan Markets – Dave Swenson, *Department of Economics, Iowa State University*

² SOURCE: The Actual Cost of Food Systems on Roadway Infrastructure — Omar Smadi, *ISU Center for Transportation Research and Education*