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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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To: Area Media  
From: Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission  
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### **Northeast Iowa Team Selected to Participate in Job Access Mobility Institute**

Decorah, IA – A team from Northeast Iowa has been selected to participate in the 2012-2013 Job Access Mobility Institute. As one of seven community teams selected nationwide by The Joblinks Employment Transportation Center, a program of the Community Transportation Association of America, the team will take part in a multi-month research, design and implementation process for creating solutions to job access mobility issues in their community. “The Mobility Institute is an exciting opportunity to find some truly innovative transportation solutions that could significantly improve the lives of our citizens,” remarked Karn Pankow, the region’s Mobility Manager.

Teams were chosen based on their commitment and readiness to engage in an innovative, design approach to solving an identified job access mobility issue in their communities. The winners emerged from a competitive field of applications. The *Northeast Iowa Mobility Solutions* team is being co-led by Karla Organist, Program Manager for Transportation and Community Planning for Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission and Karn Pankow, Operations/Mobility Manager for Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation – Transit. Additional team members include: Fern Rissman, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Director, Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission; Spiff Slifka, Development Coordinator, Howard County Business and Tourism; Pat O’Regan, Chief Operating Officer, AGRI STAR Processors; Roger Thomas, Executive Director, Main Street Elkader – Elkader Development Corporation and State Legislator; Sherry Buchheit, PROMISE JOBS Case Manager, Iowa Workforce Development.

Over the next several months, the team will:

- undertake community research on job access issues;
- apply their research in choosing a priority job access need;
- convene a one-day workshop to engage the broader community in the team’s efforts;
- attend a 3.5-day Job Access Mobility Summit in Arlington, Virginia to participate in learning forums and, as teams, brainstorm solutions and create an action plan for implementing them; and
- return home to field test and implement their project.

Teams will benefit from working with a trained facilitator throughout the Institute and Summit experiences. Joblinks’ goals for the Institute are to:

- Bring together broad-based regional partners from the transportation, employment and training, economic development, business sectors, and others to solve a specific job access mobility challenge in their community.
- Catalyze innovative employment transportation service delivery solutions that respond to the transportation challenges of job seekers and low-income workers
- Teach a user-centered design approach to creating or improving job access services
- Model a process that partnerships find both rewarding and compelling for use in both the near- and long-term to create solutions to other mobility challenges

These goals reflect Joblinks’ vision for a nation in which transportation is always the link, and never the barrier, to accessing training, employment, child care and related destinations. For additional information, contact Karla Organist, [korganist@uerpc.org](mailto:korganist@uerpc.org) or Karn Pankow, [karn@neicac.org](mailto:karn@neicac.org).