

Culver honors firms for supporting troops

By Rod Boshart Sioux City Journal Des Moines Bureau | Posted: Tuesday, September 08, 2009
(Story also ran in Mason City Globe Gazette, divisions of Lee Enterprises)

DES MOINES -- Bill Benskin, leader of a small printing business in Des Moines, said today he knows how important it is to take family issues "off the table" for employees deployed for military duty overseas.

Having had a son serve two tours of duty in Iraq with the Marines and an employee just returned from a deployment in Afghanistan, Benskin, chief executive officer of The Printers Inc., said he had no problem providing financial and other support in cases where employees are called up for duty as members of the Iowa National Guard or reserves.

"It's the least we can do," Benskin said in accepting the 2009 Iowa Freedom Award in the small employer category for businesses with fewer than 500 workers. The award recognizes the exemplary ways Iowa employers support their National Guard and reserve employees.

Dick Rue, chairman of the Iowa Committee of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, which is a Department of Defense agency, said Printers Inc. was honored for continuing to pay and provide benefits to military employees during deployment, for holding send-off events, and for contacting employees by email while they are serving elsewhere.

Other 2009 Iowa Freedom Award recipients honored during a ceremony today at Gov. Chet Culver's Statehouse office were Decker Truck Lines of Fort Dodge in the large employer category and Iowa State Patrol post 14 in Ottumwa in the public sector category.

The governor thanked all those who serve as members of the armed forces and the employers who have "gone above and beyond the call of duty" by supporting deployed citizen soldiers "not simply by words but with actions."

"Guard members and reservists truly are hometown heroes," Culver added. "They are deployed sometimes at a moment's notice, like during the storms of 2008, to serve our country and our state, serving on missions domestic and international."