

# Decker earns Iowa Freedom Award

## Honor recognizes support of National Guardsmen and military Reserves

By BILL SHEA, Messenger staff writer *POSTED: September 13, 2009*

While Sgt. 1st Class Troy Rubel was in Kosovo about two years ago with his Iowa Army National Guard unit, his family at home in Dakota City was faced with a calamity - a downpour had caused sewage to back up into the house.

With Rubel unable to help, his civilian employer, Decker Truck Line Inc., of Fort Dodge, took care of the problem.

Don Decker, the company's president and chairman of the board, sent four employees and a pickup full of cleaning supplies to the Rubel house.

That action was perhaps Decker's most dramatic show of support for Rubel and other employees who serve in the National Guard and military Reserves.

That record of support was recognized recently when Gov. Chet Culver honored the company with the 2009 Iowa Freedom Award.

The Iowa Freedom Award recognizes the exemplary ways Iowa employers support their employees in the National Guard and military Reserves, according to a statement from Culver's office. Just three of those awards are presented each year. Decker Truck Line Inc. received the award for large employers.

Don Decker said he felt pride and "a sense of accomplishment" about the award.

"I appreciate all that Don's done and his support for all of us in the military who work for Decker," Rubel said.

In the military, he is a battalion fire direction chief for Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 194th Field Artillery based in Fort Dodge. In that capacity, he enters data into computers to help ensure that the cannons shoot accurately at targets.

In civilian life, he is a van and reefer customer service representative for the trucking company.

"He's a heck of a good employee," Decker said.

Rubel nominated the company for the Pro Patria Award presented annually by Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a group that serves as a go-between for businesses and their workers who are in the military. The company received that award in the spring.

The Freedom Award came as a surprise to both Rubel and Decker.

The award was presented Tuesday in Culver's office at the state Capitol. Tony Russell, Decker's chief operating officer, accepted the award for the company.

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From L to R: ESGR State Chair Richard Rue, Tony Russell, Chief Operating Officer for Decker, Governor Chet Culver, ESGR State Vice Chair Rob Kelly