

## **KAY ANDERSON FRIEND OF IOWA AWARD**

**Nominee: Robert Bauman**

### **Part II**

Mr. Bauman has demonstrated his leadership abilities and passion for rural Iowans through his role as CEO of Butler County Rural Electric Cooperative, President of Homeward, Inc., and as an active community citizen. He has served in national and state leadership positions for many organizations related to the electric cooperative and housing industries. Through these positions, he has worked to place the needs of rural Iowans in the forefront and to educate individuals who are not familiar with rural Iowa issues. His willingness to serve in a variety of leadership and volunteer positions also demonstrates how passionately he responds to the needs and issues of rural Iowans and his commitment to improve quality of life.

One area that best demonstrates his commitment to Iowans and his leadership ability has been his role in the formation of Homeward and his involvement in its operation since 1996. Mr. Bauman was one of the founders of Homeward, a 501(c)(4) non-profit organization formed for the purpose of assisting rural Iowans with housing needs. It was originally established by four rural electric cooperatives in Iowa, and later four additional rural electric cooperatives joined its membership. As President of Homeward, Mr. Bauman serves as a volunteer, but is also involved in its day-to-day operation. Mr. Bauman has initiated the development of Homeward's programs, which include Homebuyer Assistance, Home Improvement Loan, Energy Efficiency Loan, Employer Assisted Housing, Community Development, and Housing Trust Fund programs. The development of each program was due to Mr. Bauman's ability to recognize the needs of rural communities.

Homeward had only one employee until 2004, when another person was hired, which is significant given that Homeward has assisted nearly 800 families since its inception. The ability of Homeward's staff to achieve this number of loans is a collaborative effort of the board, and as President of the organization, Mr. Bauman has been the most involved. The total loans outstanding as of spring 2008 were \$3.2 million, which is also significant. The available capital to make these loans possible initially was the result of several successful applications to a variety of funding sources. Mr. Bauman has been instrumental in identifying possible funding sources and pursuing applications to fund various programs. Homeward was certified by the U.S. Treasury Certified Development Finance Institution program, and Mr. Bauman's efforts were fundamental in identifying the potential of its formation, its application and successful certification. Mr. Bauman also assumed the responsibility of implementing the program and oversaw all aspects.

Mr. Bauman has a talent in recognizing rural Iowans' issues, identifying possible solutions, and designing programs to meet those solutions. These objectives often involve securing outside funding from the state and federal governments, at which Mr. Bauman has been very successful. This success is a direct result of the passion he feels

for improving rural Iowa, demonstrated daily by his willingness to voluntarily offer his time and talents to Homeward.

Homeward, Inc. has been recognized for its success by two national organizations. Homeward is a recipient of the National Community Service Award from the National Rural Electric Cooperative and the James Leach Award for Outstanding Achievement in Rural Development from the National Community Reinvestment Coalition. While the awards were made to Homeward's staff and board of directors, they would not have been possible without Mr. Bauman's leadership role and involvement in Homeward.

There are a wide variety of professional activities in which he is involved that merit mention because of the time, dedication, and leadership that is required. Mr. Bauman currently serves as a board member for the National Cooperative Service Corporation and has served on the Iowa Association of Business and Industry Board. He has also served as chair and board member on several committees for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Mr. Bauman's involvement in Homeward has also presented opportunities to volunteer on several housing-related committees and boards. He currently serves on the Governor's Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission's Housing Task Force and has served on the Governor's Task Force on Housing. He has also served on the Fannie Mae Iowa Partnership Office Advisory Committee and as Chair of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Rural Housing Advisory Committee.

Mr. Bauman's participation in state and national organizations leaves little time for local community involvement; however, he has also been a supportive community member. Mr. Bauman currently serves on the Parish Council at St. Mary's Church in Waverly. In the past he has served on the Waverly Airport Commission and the Waverly Municipal Cable TV Committee. Mr. Bauman also demonstrates his belief in the importance of volunteering in the community by rewarding Butler County REC employees for the number of volunteer hours they accumulate annually.

As an employee of Homeward for four years and a person who knew Mr. Bauman through my work in housing planning and administration for several years, I favorably recommend Mr. Bauman be awarded this honor. I have witnessed the dedication he has demonstrated to improve the quality of life for rural Iowans through his work at Butler County REC and through his role as President of Homeward. I have witnessed the number of hours he works in finding solutions to problems and the travel required of him to attend meetings that would ensure that the needs of Iowans are heard. I have also witnessed the respect he has for all persons he encounters, and the respect he has for his employees. That respect is then returned to him, demonstrated by the dedication of his employees and the respect shown to him by his peers at the local, state and national level. I encourage you to select Mr. Bauman for the Kay Anderson Friend of Iowa Award because he reflects the outstanding qualities that Kay Anderson also demonstrated in her lifetime.