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Keep Iowa Beautiful Recognized at 2026 Iowa Rural Summit

[Dubuque, IA] – Keep Iowa Beautiful (KIB) was recognized with a Rand Fisher Rural Business Leadership Award by the Iowa Rural Development Council (IRDC) at a luncheon attended by more than 400 people at the 10th annual Iowa Rural Summit last week in Dubuque. The award recognizes individuals and organizations for their leadership and impact on small towns across the state.

KIB's beautification efforts are well-known across Iowa, but its Hometown Pride program was cited by the Council for its impact building capacity in small towns. Created in 2012, the Hometown Pride program provides participating groups of towns with 5 years of funding toward the cost of a Hometown Pride coach who, with training from Keep Iowa Beautiful, engages local leaders and volunteers to complete projects that address pressing needs for the community. The program supports qualifying Iowa communities, coaches, and volunteers to create physical, cultural, and economic improvements in their town to increase community pride.

The Hometown Pride program has been implemented in over 118 communities across 20 counties, raising more than \$23 million for over 2,500 community betterment projects with the help of more than 1,000 volunteers annually. In 2025 alone, 1,474 volunteers dedicated an estimated 21,500 volunteer hours to raise \$3.8 million and complete 201 community projects.

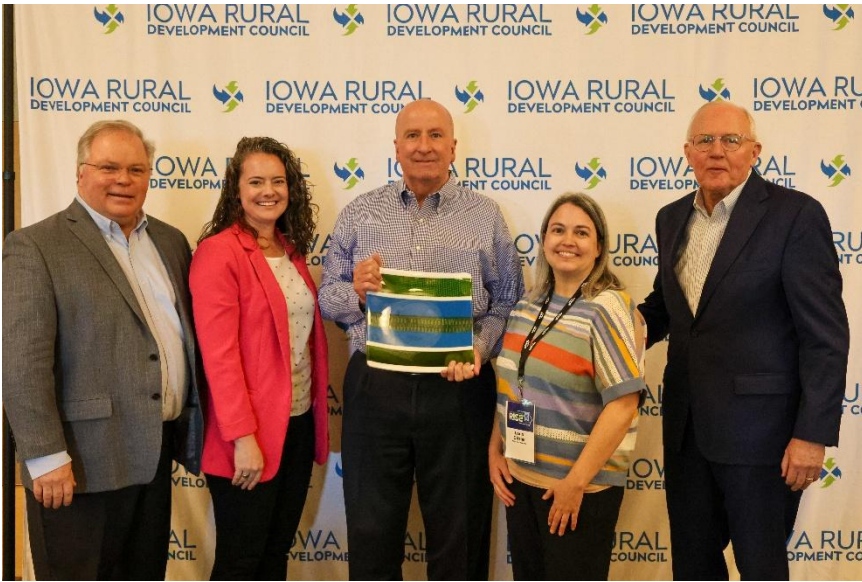
In addition to their flagship Hometown Pride program, Keep Iowa Beautiful is known for their annual Pick-Up Iowa campaign, Paint Iowa Beautiful grant program and annual Keep Iowa Beautiful photography contest. They have served all 99 counties in Iowa since their founding in 2000.

"Keep Iowa Beautiful invests in people and local leadership," explains Keep Iowa Beautiful board chair, Liesl Seabert. "It helps communities build their capacity to act on their goals. Our programs provide tangible, easy entry points for community engagement. By lowering barriers to participation and making improvement accessible, KIB ensures that even the smallest communities can engage in meaningful change."

The Rand Fisher Rural Leadership Award, sponsored by the IADG Community Foundation, recognizes nominees in rural economic and community development, philanthropy, the arts and utilities. The honorees are nominated by friends, colleagues or anyone who values their contributions to rural places.

"Hometown Pride has made a huge impact on some extremely small towns, providing the tools to help them transform their communities," said IRDC board chair Madison Burke. "Meanwhile, the KIB anchor continues to enhance the way Iowa looks!"

The IRDC, a statewide non-profit focused on small-town and rural vitality, hosts the Summit every April, bringing together leaders from small towns and partners who work in rural Iowa. This year's gathering included individuals from more than 100 small towns and focused on issues ranging from housing to K-12 education to project financing.



Keep Iowa Beautiful accepts a Rand Fisher Rural Business Leadership Award by the Iowa Rural Development Council (IRDC).

Pictured, from left to right: Bruce Nuzum, IADG President/CEO, Liesl Seibert, Keep Iowa Beautiful Board Chair, Andy Frantz, Keep Iowa Beautiful Executive Director, Lorin Ditzler, Keep Iowa Beautiful Associate Director, Rand Fisher, IADG Past President.

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About Keep Iowa Beautiful

Founded in 2000 by Governor Robert D. Ray and Donald F. Lamberti, Keep Iowa Beautiful is a statewide non-profit empowering Iowans to create vibrant communities and build hometown pride through volunteer-driven enhancement programs. An affiliate of the Keep America Beautiful program, Keep Iowa Beautiful strives for a thriving Iowa supported by strong local leadership, beautiful public spaces, and engaged residents. To learn more about our programs or to donate, please visit our website at www.KeepIowaBeautiful.org