



# HOLIDAY GIVING SPIRIT

## HOW IOWA BUSINESSES SHOW THANKS

*Charles Sukup, chairman, Sukup Manufacturing Co.*





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The Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI) is the voice of Iowa business. It is Iowa's oldest and largest business network, representing 1,500 businesses that employ more than 333,000 Iowans. ABI benefits members by advocating on their behalf at the statehouse, connecting them with decision-makers to share ideas and services, offering solutions and best practices for issues that affect their businesses and developing our state's business and civic leaders.

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A CUSTOM PUBLICATION FOR ABI

## A VIEW FROM THE TOP

# The Election is Over: Here's the Most Important Thing You Can Do Now



**Steven M. Bradford**  
*ABI Chair  
HNI Corporation  
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This month's edition of Business Record Iowa focuses on unique holiday gifts that ABI members give to others. The cover story is a fun and thoughtful read, and I hope you will let us know what unique gifts you give or have received.

In the meantime, be assured that the November election was important to ABI. Not because of who is or is not in control of the Iowa General Assembly or the U.S. Congress, but because it marks the end of the campaign season. Now, we know who our elected officials are and we can work with them to improve our state.

With the election behind us, the single most important thing you can do is to reach out to your legislative and congressional delegations. Get your elected officials into your plant or office. Show them what you do and explain the impact of their decisions on your business.

Next, be sure and attend the 2021 ABI Legisla-

tive Reception. This annual event is one of ABI's most popular events. Because of your participation, it draws more Iowa legislators (of both parties) than any similar event. Your local legislators will enjoy this opportunity to visit with you and your fellow Iowa business leaders in a relaxed and informal setting.

As always, all 150 legislators (many of whom are newly elected) and Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds and Lt. Gov. Adam Gregg have been invited to join you at the reception. Find more information at [www.iowaabi.org](http://www.iowaabi.org).

Speaking of events, remember to mark your calendars now for ABI's biggest annual event, the annual conference. The 2021 ABI Taking Care of Business Conference will be terrific, and you do not want to miss it. I look forward to seeing you in Iowa City/Coralville in June. ■

## CULTIVATING IOWA'S TALENT CONTINUUM

# The gift that keeps on giving: Donate to the ABI Foundation to make a difference in the lives of Iowans



**Becky Coady**  
*Vice President,  
ABI Foundation  
[rcoady@iowaabi.org](mailto:rcoady@iowaabi.org)*

'Tis the season, shown by the décor of jolly wreaths hanging on our doors and also by the tax documents collecting on our desks. Just as we carefully consider what presents to put under the tree for family and friends, many of us will also be contemplating what causes to support during the holidays and start of the new year. The ABI Foundation would appreciate being among your non-profit giving.

The strength in our statewide educational leadership programs can only happen because of the support received from grants, sponsorships and—with our utmost gratitude—donations. As we work to advance our state every day, it is Iowa's inspiring leaders who make it possible.

We thank those who participated in #GivingTuesdayNow in May, and #GivingTuesday last month, global campaigns encouraging non-profit giving that specifically focused this year on funding difficulties related to COVID. During the summer, many others also celebrated Iowa's best with our annual auction, which this year was on-line and featured a virtual reception.

Among these supporters are previous participants of our programs, who have stayed connected through annual contributions, our alumni society and other involvement. There are also the many employers and community members who recommend and support their students and workers year after year. Together, we make a difference in the lives of Iowans.

Here are two donation methods to consider:

### CHOOSE THE ABI FOUNDATION

The ABI Foundation is registered with many organizations that facilitate and amplify giving efforts. These include employer-employee matching gifts, the United Way and Endow Iowa. Our work is mutually beneficial for participants, employers and the State of Iowa, and donating is too. As a 501c3 non-profit, donations are fully tax-deductible.

### CHOOSE YOUR IMPACT

You may direct your donation to a program or for a purpose, if you would like. Our programs reach Iowans at building stages of their lives and careers from high school to college to professionals. One directed donation we recommend is need-based financial assistance that covers the program tuition costs of participants to help us ensure the accessibility of our programs. Another way to assist in our ability to fortify our state's future is through our Foundation Endowment Fund. These gifts ensure we remain successful in our reach and longevity.

Credit card payments may be made online at [www.LeadershipIowa.com](http://www.LeadershipIowa.com) or by calling 515-235-0578. To request an invoice, email [foundation@iowaabi.org](mailto:foundation@iowaabi.org). Checks may be made out to "ABI Foundation" and sent to 400 E. Court Ave, Ste. 100, Des Moines, IA 50309. ■





*Charles Sukup, chairman, Sukup Manufacturing Co.*



# HOLIDAY GIVING SPIRIT

## HOW IOWA BUSINESSES SHOW THANKS

BY GIGI WOOD

There will still be presents under the tree and twinkling lights in the windows this December. Snow will blanket the ground outside and fires will roar in fireplaces. Families will continue to gather for hot chocolate, gingerbread cookies and roasted turkey with holiday songs being hummed in homes throughout the prairie.

While the holiday season might be different this year, with fewer of our family members gathering together, the essence of Christmas remains. Part of that essence is the spirit of giving. Whether it's giving to family or friends, there is no curtailment of our enthusiasm for kindness, hospitality and charity.

The same spirit of giving remains at businesses, as well, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. At some companies, business has continued, with workers manufacturing goods across the state. At other places of work, office staff is greatly reduced, with employees working from home. Despite the change in scenery, many businesses are eager to give to co-workers and clients for holiday cheer.

### A tradition of giving

In Sheffield, a town 20 miles south of Mason City, is Sukup Manufacturing Co., the world's largest family-owned and operated producer of grain storage, grain drying and handling equipment. With more than 600 employees, it is one of the largest employers in northern Iowa.

Each year, the company spreads holiday cheer by sending out boxes of apples to its customers. Inspiration for the gift came after the family received a box of oranges as a holiday gift from Western Growers in Chico, Calif., back in the late 1960s. That was well before online shopping, when a shipment of fresh oranges was a luxurious treat.

"When we started doing business with them, they sent a box of oranges from a grove near Chico, Calif., and our family, we were just enthralled with getting a box of oranges from California," said Charles Sukup, chairman of Sukup Manufacturing.

For many years, Sukup gave out poinsettias to dealers during the holiday season and still does today. When the family was brainstorming ideas for an additional gift with special pizzazz to give out, that memory of California oranges resurfaced. They thought of a way to give a box of fruit with an Iowa twist.

"Poinsettias are nice because they look attractive in the office

and people notice," Sukup said. "There's also something nice about something you can eat. And we decided, why don't we send out apples? It didn't work for us to send out oranges."

In the past, the company bought apples from Iowa orchards or from Fareway, but after a few cold seasons and the 2020 derecho, which took out hundreds of apple trees, Sukup has procured its apples from an orchard in Gay Mills, Wis.

"Oftentimes in the past, we'd use Iowa orchards; in recent years there's been some weather issues, so we've used apples grown in the Midwest here," Sukup said. "We send them out to our big customers and friends and acquaintances. It's just a very pleasurable thing."

### A thankful harvest

Part of the appeal of apples is that they are a healthy snack during a time when people receive a lot of baked goods and candy. Instead of one item, it's a gift that can be distributed to many in an office setting. Sukup said apples also follow the theme of harvest and giving thanks.

"The apples kind of put us on the map as something that was different," Sukup said. "We always had a harvest theme, a Thanksgiving theme to it and a note on the box that says, 'This is the season of harvest and we give thanks to our friends and to our customers and we want to share the bounty of the earth.' We give great thanks to our customers and want to share."

The Sukup family decides at an annual meeting which apple variety to send out. Sukup Manufacturing has sent out boxes of Red Delicious, Cortlands, Braeburns and other varieties. This year, they sent out boxes of 40 Cameo apples.

"Amongst us in the company, we have such a difference in opinion about what apples we like," Sukup said. "I like a soft, sweet apple, but most people don't care for those and others in the family have very different feelings."

A sense of gratitude is an important sentiment to the Sukup family as it looks to 2021.

"The positives coming out of it is that we're learning new ways to deal with things and we're finding that things like Zoom and online interactions, that we're getting more out of them than we first thought," Sukup said. "The loss of personal relationships and connections, when it does come back, we'll take a higher appreciation for how important it is."

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### Giving to those who give back

At BCC Advisers, an advisory firm based in Des Moines, the company donates a monetary gift to a charity as a holiday gift to clients.

“Early on, we tried to come up with creative gifts each year to send clients, prospects and referral sources to show our appreciation and help them remember our firm,” said Steve Jacobs, president of BCC Advisers.

“As we thought through that effort, the partners and employees at BCC Advisers and Iowa Appraisal & Research felt it was more appropriate to recognize these important business relationships by making a cash gift to an organization that supports critical community needs.”

In the past, the company gave donations to the World Food Prize, but in recent years it has contributed to the Food Bank of Iowa. BCC Advisers shares the news about the donation in a clever holiday card sent by postal mail, or through an email that wishes a successful and healthy holiday and new year to friends, clients and others.

“This year, that will be especially important given the pandemic and the negative impact on our economy,” Jacobs said. “We believe it is an important pillar of our company to help those less fortunate in any way we can.”

### A gift of Iowa values and virtues

Iowa Area Development Group, which provides economic development leadership, services and support to more than 225 rural electric cooperatives, utility and telephone companies, works to promote rural communities

throughout the state. During the holiday season, IADG gives a gift they say emulates rural Iowa’s character, the Our Iowa magazine.

“We want our partners and clients to see, hear and experience the beauty of Iowa,” said Rand Fisher, IADG president. “We want them to make connections and discover all that rural Iowa has to offer.”

The magazine is also a way to promote Iowa as a great place to live, he said.

“We believe the beautiful photography and excellent stories that are a part of every issue help us reinforce Iowa as a great place to live, work and play,” Fisher said. “We think the magazine richly and tastefully represents the virtues and values of Iowa. Every year we expand the subscription list, adding new partners and clients. Many of our business prospects end up locating in Iowa.”

The group has continued to give the magazine each year because of the positive feedback they receive.

“People share stories about places they have visited, products and services they have made it a point to try,” he said. “The magazine truly invites people to experience Iowa. When they do that, we’re fulfilling our sponsors’ mission.”

Fisher grew up in Red Oak, known as the “birthplace of the art calendar industry.”

“I grew up being told that you give people calendars promoting your business because they look at it every day,” he said. “In some ways, a magazine that comes regularly into your home and business throughout the year achieves that same objective.” ■



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## CAPITOL BUSINESS



## Say Goodbye to 2020 with a Final Public Policy Review

We all feel it. The compulsion to close the books on 2020, move on to 2021 and have a fresh start. However, it will benefit us if we take one last look back on the ABI policy responses to the COVID-19 challenges of 2020, assess how the association reacted to them and look at how ABI is positioned to work on pro-business, pro-growth policy moving forward.

On March 17, 2020, Gov. Reynolds issued an emergency proclamation shuttering many businesses in the state while also recognizing that Iowa is home to several essential industries that must continue despite the virus. Due to necessary government action at all levels and the progress of the virus, Iowa employers and employees experienced sudden and high levels of unemployment. As a first response, state and federal resources were made available to aid the unemployed to the greatest extent possible.

As Iowa dealt with the pandemic, ABI acted to make sure that Iowa employers were recognized as the job creators that they are. ABI promoted the implementation of policy ensuring that individual member company unemployment rates would not affect that company's 2021 unemployment tax rates. Further, with an unprecedented number of claims for unemployment benefits in aggregate, all employers were at risk of higher unemployment taxes in 2021 just to keep the Iowa Unemployment Trust fund solvent. ABI encouraged and supported action by Gov. Reynolds allocating \$495 million in federal coronavirus relief funds to the Iowa Unemployment Trust Fund. This action provides certainty to all employers that unemployment withholding taxes will not increase in 2021. No other

administration in the country has demonstrated such foresight.

Throughout the spring and summer of 2020, it became clear that individuals and organizations would attempt to use the court system to lay blame for who is responsible for infections of what is a community-spread pandemic. ABI led an effort to shield businesses, hospitals, schools and others from liability actions in Iowa courts. The Iowa Legislature and the governor responded by enacting a liability law that has been held out as a model for other states.

2020 was also an election year for 25 of 50 Iowa Senators and all 100 members of the Iowa House. The Iowa Industry Political Action Committee (IIPAC), the political arm of ABI, met with candidates for office, considered recommendations for support and ultimately made bipartisan endorsements of 20 Senate candidates (19 won) and 59 House candidates (57 won). When these winners take their oath of office in January 2021, ABI will again be working with chambers that are comprised of a majority of pro-business, pro-growth candidates.

None of the necessary steps to face the difficulties that 2020 presented could have been achieved without the diligent efforts of ABI members interacting with policymakers as they sought to deal with the unprecedented challenges of 2020. As we shift focus to 2021, please keep up the great public policy advocacy. Consider joining your fellow ABI members at the Legislative Briefing and Reception. You can do so by registering here: <https://cvent.me/mqzXRX>. ■



**JD Davis**

*Vice President,  
Public Policy, ABI  
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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS



**JANUARY 13**

**Legislative Briefing and Reception**

**JANUARY 13-15**

**Leadership Iowa**

Des Moines

**MARCH 4**

**Connecting Statewide Leaders**

Quad Cities

**MARCH 4-5**

**Leadership Iowa**

Quad Cities

**MARCH 11**

**Iowa Business Day on the Hill**

ABI Office | Des Moines

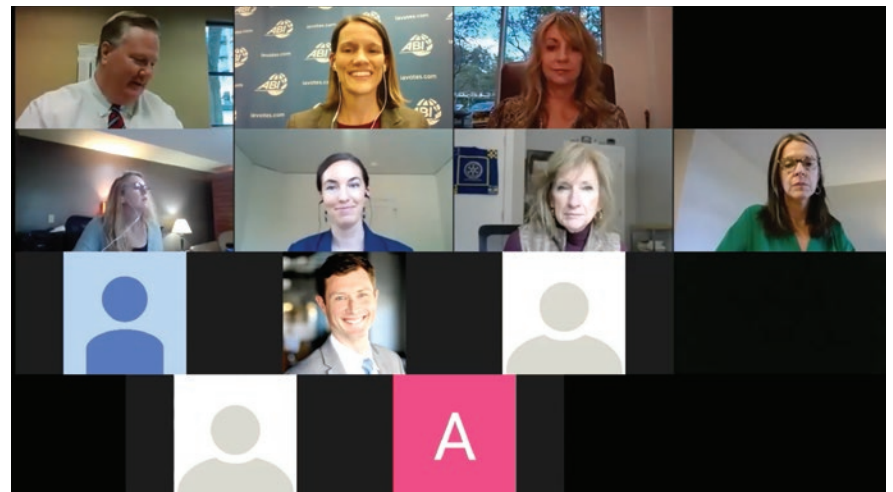
**MARCH 23**

**Workers' Compensation: Best Practices**

ABI Office | Des Moines

Visit [www.iowaabi.org](http://www.iowaabi.org) and click the "Events" tab for details on upcoming events, including updates in response to COVID-19-related safety restrictions for public gatherings.

## EVENT REWIND



### "Intersection of Unemployment and Childcare" Virtual Meeting October 29 | Virtual

ABI, its partners and its members continue to work together to find solutions to the childcare challenges facing Iowa's workforce. This virtual event featured Dr. Laurie Todd-Smith, director of the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau, and Julia Barfield, senior manager of policy and programs at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. Dr. Todd-Smith shared statistics about employment from the U.S. Department of Labor. Barfield discussed childcare issues specific to Iowa and COVID-19..



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Learn more about how ABI membership could benefit your company by visiting [www.iowaabi.org/membership/why-abi](http://www.iowaabi.org/membership/why-abi).

NEED TO KNOW

Make the Most of Your ABI Membership

Taking an active role in ABI is the best way to maximize your membership ROI. Here are just a few of the many ways for you to get involved:

- 1. **INFLUENCE** – Join a public policy committee. There are five public policy committees: Economic Growth, Environment, Employment and Workforce, Workplace and Product Safety, and Tax. Weigh in on the issues most important to your business and influence key policy decisions. Contact: JD Davis, vice president, public policy, [jddavis@iowaabi.org](mailto:jddavis@iowaabi.org).
- 2. **NETWORK** – Attend and sponsor events. Exciting events like the annual conference offer valuable networking and educational opportunities. Visit [www.iowaabi.org/events](http://www.iowaabi.org/events) to see what's coming up. Contact: Holly Mueggenberg, director, member programs, [hmueggenberg@iowaabi.org](mailto:hmueggenberg@iowaabi.org).
- 3. **PROMOTE** – Submit articles and story ideas. Reach thousands of ABI members by sharing your news and expertise in our weekly newsletter, weekly blog posts and monthly news magazine. Contact: David Hildahl, communications manager, [dhildahl@iowaabi.org](mailto:dhildahl@iowaabi.org).
- 4. **ENGAGE** – Connect with ABI Foundation program participants. Share the great opportunities our state has to offer with some of the brightest, most driven high school students, college students and professionals in the state. Visit [www.iowaabi.org/abi-foundation](http://www.iowaabi.org/abi-foundation) to learn more.
- 5. **SAVE** – Participate in the Buy ABI program. Receive deep discounts on valuable products and services from fellow ABI members. Visit [www.iowaabi.org/membership/buy-abi](http://www.iowaabi.org/membership/buy-abi) to learn more.

Contact a member of our staff or visit [www.iowaabi.org](http://www.iowaabi.org) to engage with ABI in the areas that interest you most. ■

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