

Written by Steve Davis  
Tuesday, 09 July 2013 09:03

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Des Moines, July 3, 2013 - The Wapello County Family Treatment Court and Associate Juvenile Judge William S. Owens received awards from the National Rural Drug Abuse Network, at that group's annual institute on drug and alcohol abuse.

The Wapello County Family Treatment Court was awarded the Harold E. Hughes, Exceptional Rural Program - Award of Excellence. This national award is given annually to a rural program that exemplifies outstanding contribution to the rural alcohol and drug abuse field by establishing exceptional services in the field that help to improve the lives of those who suffer the effects of alcohol and drug abuse.

Judge Owens was awarded the Harold E. Hughes, Exceptional Rural Professional - Award of Excellence. This award, also given annually at the National Rural Institute, goes to a rural professional who exemplifies outstanding contribution to the rural alcohol and drug abuse field.

"We are especially pleased to receive these awards because they are named in honor of former Iowa governor and senator, Harold E. Hughes, who dedicated his professional and personal life to providing appropriate treatment to individuals suffering from the disease of alcohol and drug addiction," Judge Owens said. "Our group is the first from Iowa to be honored with the Exceptional Rural Program Award, and I am only one of two Iowans to be individually honored as an exceptional rural professional".

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Family drug courts focus on the welfare of children with parents who have substance abuse problems. The courts emphasize judge-led community collaborations that offer treatment for substance-abusing parents, while holding them accountable through intensive court supervision. As in adult drug courts, participants in family drug courts are required to take random and frequent drug tests and appear weekly before a judge. The goal is to reunite broken families.

Judge Owens is the Associate Juvenile Judge to District 8A, which includes Wapello County. He was appointed to the bench in 1999. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas in 1981 and his law degree from Drake University Law School in 1984. He has previously received two additional awards for his work with the Wapello County Treatment Court.

These two prestigious national awards were presented at the award ceremony on June 11, 2013, at the University of Wisconsin - Stout in Menomonie, Wisconsin.

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