



May 29, 2019

Dear 2019/2020 Women of Influence Review Committee:

On behalf of the Iowa Rural Development Council (IRDC), an organization with more than 100 partners representing government, businesses, non-profits and associations, I am happy to endorse the nomination of Grinnell Mutual's Barb Baker for your "Women of Influence" award.

As a fellow Grinnell resident, I have known Barb for many years. She has been a tireless volunteer, leader and community advocate here at home.

But, I also know the much broader role Barb has taken across Iowa – both in her Grinnell Mutual role and beyond. She has been a Leadership Iowa champion, an active ABI member, and I'm happy to say a passionate Iowa Rural Development Council member.

Barb also took it upon herself to seek appointment to the Empower Rural Iowa task force, and was selected by Governor Kim Reynolds to serve on the "Connecting Rural Iowa" subgroup. Barb is now deeply involved in conversations about extending high-speed broadband to rural parts of our state.

I have spent more than 20 years working in rural economic development, including almost eight years as USDA Rural Development state director in Iowa. In that time, I have seen the impact of strong, committed leaders on small towns. Barb Baker is the sort of person whose role is transformational in those settings.

I'm pleased to submit this letter of support for the nomination of this much-deserving individual.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Menner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Bill Menner
Executive Director