



PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

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America in Bloom Judges to Visit Greenwood, SC June 15-16

Professional volunteer judges from the America in Bloom (AIB) national awards program will visit Greenwood, SC on June 15 and 16. This is Greenwood's second year as an America in Bloom participant, and is one of the many proud and passionate communities across America working on local revitalization programs with an eye to receiving a prestigious America in Bloom national award. Greenwood will be participating in the 20,000 to 30,000 population category.

Greenwood in Bloom, the local steering committee for the program, is gearing up for the tour with plans for their visit in addition to documenting action items from last year's evaluation into the current community profile.

"We have taken several of the suggestions and recommendations from the judges last year and put them into action. Our community might notice some new additions to Uptown as well as some newly landscaped areas. In addition, we are now a Bee City USA community which is a direct result of the America in Bloom effort," noted Kelly McWhorter of the Greenwood Regional Tourism and Visitors Bureau and staff support for the America in Bloom program.

Angelle LaBorde, President/CEO of the Greenwood Chamber and the SC Festival of Flowers stated, "The Chamber's current Leadership Greenwood class is looking forward to assisting in some key community cleanup efforts to help spruce up Greenwood for the judges visit. We would like to encourage all Greenwood citizens to do the same as we not only prepare for this visit but the many visitors that will be in Greenwood during the 50th Anniversary of the SC Festival of Flowers."

In addition to a receiving detailed written evaluation from the judges citing strengths and opportunities for improvement, participants receive a bloom rating and special mention for what the judges deem to be an extraordinary project or program.

Bruce Riggs, the lead judge for the visit, currently free-lances in horticulture and is involved in several not for profit institutions. He is also very involved in the family landscape design business with his wife Melanie Menachem Riggs who is also an AIB judge. They reside in New Rochelle, New York. He recently held the position of Curator of Science at the Bruce Museum of Arts & Science in Greenwich, CT.

During his 18 years at the New York Botanical Garden, Bruce was very involved with the Horticulture and Education Divisions. He administered the creation and implementation of the internationally recognized interpretation program for the NYBG.

He has recently been very involved in elementary school science and horticulture programs. He has worked on projects for the American Association of Museums and the Institute of Museum Studies. He has been very involved with Mountain Top Arboretum in Tannersville, NY, serving as President since 1998. Bruce is an avid traveler having visited numerous gardens and natural areas.

Also judging is Jack Clasen. Jack brings a varied background to AIB. After receiving a Ph.D. in Community Health from Indiana University, he began his career as a college professor, then small business owner, community volunteer, and Master Gardener. He has been with AIB since its inception. Before retiring to Raleigh, he lived in the Cincinnati area where he co-founded and chaired the local beautification committee and the annual "Art in the Garden" tour. His own yard was voted one of the 10 best in the tri-state region, was filmed by HGTV, and featured in Cincinnati Magazine.

Jack serves as co-chair of the national awards program and secretary of the AIB board. He has judged more than 75 communities in the USA, Canada, Scotland, and Ireland.

Judges will be evaluating the community's efforts in the areas of overall impression, environmental efforts, heritage, landscaped areas, urban forestry, floral displays, and community involvement in the municipal, commercial and residential sectors.

For more information on Greenwood in Bloom, contact Kelly McWhorter at 864-953-2465, or via email at kelly.mcwhorter@gwdcity.com. or Angelle LaBorde at 864-889-8312, or via email at angelle@greenwoodscchamber.org.

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