



America in Bloom
PO Box 44005
Columbus, OH 43204
614-453-0744
aib@americainbloom.org
www.americainbloom.org

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 3, 2017

Laura A. Kunkle

America in Bloom Executive Director

America in Bloom Judges to Visit Ottawa, Illinois

Professional volunteer judges from the America in Bloom (AIB) national awards program will visit Ottawa, Illinois on July 10 and 11. This is Ottawa's fifth year as an America in Bloom participant, and it 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. Ottawa won its population category in 2014 and took home the Outstanding Achievement award for Community Involvement in 2015.

Ottawa joins King City, California; Tavares, Florida; and Dyer Indiana in the 13,001-18,000 population category.

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. Additional awards that can be earned are as follows:

- Population category winner
- Outstanding achievement award – the “best of the best” over all participants in each of the six evaluated criteria
- Special awards
- Community Champion
- YouTube Video

Population category winners are invited to participate in international competition via the Communities in Bloom program in Canada.

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

The judging team members are Sue Amatangelo and Rod Barnes.



Sue Amatangelo



Rod Barnes

Sue Amatangelo brings a well-rounded background to America in Bloom. Sue became a Master Gardener for the University of Illinois where she won the Illinois Outstanding Master Gardener Award. Sue is currently the Midwest, Northeast, and Eastern Canada Sales Manager for EuroAmerican Propagators, founder of the #1 plant brand, Proven Winners. In her role, Sue works closely with brokers, growers, independent retailers and large retailers to provide quality and unique young plants and retail-ready programs and products. Her previous position as Brand Manager was with Park Seed, a division of JPPA which includes Jackson & Perkins, Wayside Gardens and Van Dyke's Restorers. She has also worked for the Ball Horticultural Company as the National Retail Accounts Manager, working on annual and perennial programs for major retailers and growers in the US and Canada. In 2010 Sue accepted the position of Director for Home & Garden Showplace, the independent garden center division of the True Value Company, growing the business to more than \$70M. Since 2000, Sue has been a Plan Commissioner for the city of St. Charles, Illinois and prior to that sat on the Zoning Board of Appeals. She is a Horticulture Superintendent of the Kane County, Illinois, Fair, a past board member of the Garden Centers of America and the University of Illinois Kane County Council. Sue is a member of the American Planning Association (APA), the Garden Writers Association (GWA) and the American Horticulture Society (AHS), and Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators (SCBWI). Sue is the author of *Absolutely Beautiful Containers* and has written a children's book on gardening. She is an active speaker with a particular passion to get consumers engaged and excited about gardening. She has been a guest on radio shows, a writer for both industry and consumer magazines and a guest speaker for the Epcot International Flower and Garden Festival. An America in Bloom judge since 2010, Sue helped to bring her own community of St. Charles, IL into the AIB program for 2015 and Greenwood, SC, her adopted home, for 2016.

Rod Barnes currently serves as the Town Administrator for Edmonston, Maryland. Edmonston is a small community in the Washington DC metro region. He has a Master of Public Administration from Kansas State University. He has served as purchasing agent, finance director, city clerk and as a City Manager over his 35 years of experience in local government. While serving in local government roles, he has developed historic preservation projects and has extensive experience working on trail development and expanding park greenspace in the communities he has served. In the two years he has been at Edmonston, he has focused on the town's environmental efforts. He has expertise in the development of green streets that include the components of rain gardens, bike lanes, using recycled materials for furniture and trash receptacles and permeable paving. Other sustainable environment projects he has been involved with include the use of solar energy for heating Town Hall, the use of electric cars for Code Enforcement and Public Works. Rod was instrumental in the development of a community garden and 3 community fruit tree orchards in Edmonston.

To date, nearly 250 communities from 45 states have participated in the program and more than 22 million people have been touched by it. Awards will be announced on October 5-7, 2017 at AIB's National Symposium & Awards, held this year in Holliston, MA.

###

America in Bloom is an independent, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to promoting nationwide beautification programs and personal and community involvement through the use of flowers, plants, trees, and other environmental and lifestyle enhancements. America in Bloom provides educational programs, resources, and the challenge of a friendly competition between participating communities across the country.