

Laura – please send this release on or before June 25 to the Arroyo Grande, CA press list.

For immediate release.

For more information, contact Laura Kunkle (614-487-1117) aib@ofa.org

www.americainbloom.org

America in Bloom Judges to Visit Arroyo Grande, CA

Judges from the America in Bloom (AIB) national awards program will visit Arroyo Grande, CA on July 7 and 8. This is Arroyo Grande's seventh entry in the America in Bloom national awards program. A formidable competitor, they won their population category in 2010 and 2011, received three outstanding achievement awards, and have been inducted into AIB's prestigious "Circle of Excellence". The town is one of 28 towns across America working on local revitalization programs with the hopes of receiving a prestigious America in Bloom national award.

Arroyo Grande is competing against Washington, MO; Holliston, MA; and Catskill, NY in the 12,001 to 18,000 population category.

Judges are Melanie Riggs and Katy Moss Warner.



Melanie Riggs



Katy Moss Warner

Melanie Riggs, of New Rochelle, New York, began her career as a horticulturist for the Wildcliff Museum Greenhouses where she worked as the greenhouse Exhibitions Director for many years. Melanie graduated from the University of Vermont with a degree in Plant Science and Botany. She subsequently has studied Landscape Design and has graduate coursework in Botany. Her passion for plants and gardens compliments her passion for travel. Melanie has traveled extensively throughout Europe, South and Central America, Southeast Asia, North Africa and North America.

Riggs said, "For many years, Arroyo Grande , CA has had great progress with achieving beautification goals set up by their local AIB Arroyo Grande In Bloom committee. After reading the past evaluations -- words like vibrant, friendly, engaging, skillful are used to describe this community with over 100 active participants serving in the Arroyo Grande in Bloom group. I am looking forward to visiting and judging Arroyo Grande, CA, this long time AIB community and its inspiring community of people. "

Katy Moss Warner is President Emeritus of the American Horticultural Society (AHS), a national, non-profit, member-based organization with a bold vision of "making America a nation of gardeners, a land of gardens. Katy was the Director of Disney's Horticulture and Environmental Initiatives at the Walt Disney World Resort in Florida, responsible for the landscapes of four theme parks, 15 resort properties and over 70 miles of roads on the 30,500-acre property. For 24 years - from 1976 to 2000 - she provided the leadership necessary to ensure that Disney's horticultural traditions of beautiful gardens and themed landscapes were sustained. Katy, who lives in Windermere, Florida, has traveled extensively and has hosted garden tours in Italy, England, Belgium, Czech Republic, Argentina, Morocco as well as many

destinations within the USA. In addition to judging for America in Bloom and international competitions, Katy is a member of AIB's Board of Directors.

Warner commented, " After seeing the Arroyo Grande in Bloom You Tube videos, I can't wait to meet the incredible team who brings such beauty and vitality to their community. "

Participants have opportunities to receive recognition in the following areas:

- Bloom rating
- Population category winner
- Outstanding achievement award – the “best of the best” over all participants in each of the six evaluated criteria.
- Special mention – for what the judges deem to be an extraordinary project or program.
- Community Champion
- YouTube Video
- Population category winners are invited to participate in international competition via the Communities in Bloom program in Canada.

To date, more than 200 towns and cities from 41 states have participated in the program and more than 20 million people have been touched by it. Awards will be announced on September 21, 2013 at AIB's National Symposium and Awards, held this year in Orlando, FL.

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America in Bloom is a non-profit 501c3 corporation whose mission is to promote nationwide beautification through education and community involvement by encouraging the use of flowers, plants, trees, and other environmental and lifestyle enhancements.