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## PRESS RELEASE

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Laura A. Kunkle

America in Bloom Executive Director

### **America in Bloom Announces New Officers and Board Members**

Columbus, Ohio – America in Bloom, a community development and enhancement program, announced the election of new board members and officers following its annual meeting on March 5, 2016.

Katy Moss Warner, president emeritus of the American Horticultural Society, was elected president of the board. Evelyn Alemanni of ALLEA and Tony Ferrara of Arroyo Consulting Group, were elected 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> vice presidents, respectively. Dr. Marvin Miller, Ball Horticultural Company, was elected treasurer, and Dr Jack Clasen was elected secretary. Dr. Charlie Hall, Texas A&M University, serves as the past president.

Linda Hart of the Holland, Michigan, Walter Heath of Morro Bay, California, and Leslie Pittenger, Belpre, Ohio, were elected as new board members.

“We are very pleased to welcome Linda, Walter, and Leslie to our board of directors,” said Warner. “America in Bloom is celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Having the expertise and proven leadership of these three outstanding community leaders will help us to position the organization for continued growth in the next 15 years.”

**Linda Hart** is Community Outreach Coordinator for the Holland, Michigan Visitors Bureau. Her role is to increase awareness of the organization and its resources to the area’s businesses for their corporate business travels. Hart is active in several local community organizations, including Holland in Bloom, and she chaired the local committee that hosted the 2015 AIB symposium in Holland. Holland, a five-bloom AIB city, has been in the program for six years.

**Walter Heath** is a retired biochemist from Morro Bay, California, a five-bloom AIB city. He is the co-founder and president of Morro Bay in Bloom, and recognizes how participation in AIB has raised awareness of the importance of green spaces to creating economic development. Walter is also active on the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce board of directors.

**Leslie Pittenger** is City Auditor for Belpre, Ohio, and volunteers for numerous local organizations. As an active member of the Belpre Garden Club and Belpre High School Greenhouse boosters she works with local students to complete environmental and beautification projects. She has completed the Ohio Tree Commission Academy

course and has her Commercial Applicator license for pesticides through the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Belpre has been in the AIB program for five years.

Others on the board of directors are:

- Bobby Barnitz, Bob's Market & Greenhouse
- Drew Becher
- Marshall Dirks, Proven Winners
- Dale Fisher, Jon Carloftis Fine Gardens
- Edith Makra, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus
- John Manchester, Mayor of Lewisburg, West Virginia
- Diana Weiner, Gerry Foundation

For information about America in Bloom, visit [www.AmericaInBloom.org](http://www.AmericaInBloom.org).

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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.