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## PRESS RELEASE

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 7, 2017

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America in Bloom Executive Director

### **Ottawa, IL's America in Bloom Award Results Announced**

(Columbus, OH): Top honors for the prestigious 2017 America in Bloom National Awards Program were announced at the annual awards held in Holliston, MA on October 7. All participants were evaluated on six criteria: overall impression, environmental awareness, heritage preservation, urban forestry, landscaped areas, and floral displays. Additionally, they were judged on their community involvement across municipal, residential, and commercial sectors. America in Bloom is the only national awards program that sends specially trained judges to personally visit participants. In addition, each participant receives a detailed written evaluation that can be used as a guide to future improvements.

Ottawa was the winner of the 13,000 – 18,000 population category. Additionally they received an outstanding achievement award for heritage preservation. The outstanding achievement awards only go to one participant among ALL the AIB entrants across ALL population categories. These accomplishments have made it possible for Ottawa to become part of the prestigious Circle of Champions – participants which have won any combination of three major awards – outstanding achievement and/or population category winner.

Ottawa received a 5-bloom rating out of a possible five blooms and special recognition for its Heritage Preservation. Sue Amatangelo & Rod Barnes, AIB judges, visited communities of similar populations and spent two days touring each town, meeting municipal officials, residents, and volunteers. Other competitors in the 13,000 - 18,000 population category were Dyer, IN; King City, CA; and Tavares, FL.

America in Bloom executive director, Laura Kunkle, said, "America in Bloom is helping towns and cities of all sizes achieve their potential. Every year our participants raise the bar, and the accomplishments and progress shown by this year's group is again remarkable. These are, without a doubt, some of the best places to live in America."

To date, more than 250 communities from 45 states have participated in the program and more than 22 million people have been touched by it. Registrations for the 2018 national awards program can be submitted until February 28, 2019. Eligible participants include towns, cities, college and university campuses, business districts, military installations, and recognized neighborhoods of large cities.

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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.