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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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America in Bloom Executive Director

America in Bloom Judges to Visit Brewton, Alabama

Professional volunteer judges from the America in Bloom (AIB) national awards program will visit Brewton, Alabama on April 27-28. This is Brewton's fourth 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.

Brewton joins Lewisburg, WV; Combined Locks, WI; Kimberly, WI; Catskill, NY; and Bluffton, OH in the 3,500 to 10,000 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 Stephen Pategas and Laurie Potier-Brown.



Stephen Pategas



Laurie Potier-Brown

Stephen Pategas is an award-winning landscape architect, garden writer, garden photographer, and plant geek in Winter Park, FL. He and his wife Kristin are owners of Hortus Oasis, a boutique landscape architecture company and authors of the book *Southern Coastal Home Landscaping* and gardening columns for local magazines. Their historic 1925 home and garden have been featured on numerous garden tours, in magazines, and on television including *Growing a Greener World* hosted by Joe Lamp'1. Stephen currently serves on the City of Winter Park's Keep Winter Park Beautiful & Sustainable Board and with it founded Winter Park Blooms. Winter Park first competed in AIB in 2013. Previously he served on the Environmental Review Board, Tree Preservation Board, and the Parks and Recreation Board. After designing the gardens for Casa Feliz, a 1933 historic brick house that was saved from demolition and moved in 2000, Stephen joined the Friends of Casa Feliz board. His travels have taken him to hundreds of gardens in North America, Europe, and Southeast Asia. Stephen's favorite gardens to design are those that touch people's lives.

Laurie Potier-Brown, PLA, was raised on a dairy farm and there began a lifelong passion for wandering around in nature. She started her professional career with degrees in Psychology and Art. She wound up in the corporate world where she received extensive training in business and marketing. Twelve years of that was enough to convince her that, all in all, she would rather work with plants than people. She returned to school and graduated with a Masters in Landscape Architecture from the University of Florida. She then completed an apprenticeship in Brazil with Roberto Burle-Marx, the renowned botanist and landscape architect. Her career has included private, corporate, and government settings. She earned AICP certification while with the Hillsborough County Planning Commission. Her last formal position was with the City of Tampa. She has designed, contracted, and installed projects from tiny Zen Gardens at Hospice to 5 miles of Bayfront boulevard where 22,000 annuals were changed out 3 times a year. She now has her own landscape architecture firm in Tampa.

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.

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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.