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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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America in Bloom Judges to Visit Greenwood, South Carolina

Professional volunteer judges from the America in Bloom (AIB) national awards program will visit Greenwood, S.C. on June 15-16. This is Greenwood's second 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.

Greenwood joins Madisonville, Ky.; North Canton, Ohio; Athens, Ohio; and Lockport, Ill. in the 18,000 to 25,000 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 Bruce Riggs and Jack Clasen.



Bruce Riggs



Jack Clasen

Bruce Riggs currently freelances in horticulture and is involved in several non-profit institutions. He also works in the family landscape design business with his wife and AIB judge Melanie Menachem Riggs. They reside in New Rochelle, New York. He previously served as curator of science at the Bruce Museum of Arts & Science in Greenwich, Conn. During his 18 years at the New York Botanical Garden, Bruce was involved with the Horticulture and Education Divisions. He also launched the museum's internationally recognized interpretation program. Recently, he has been involved in elementary school science and horticulture programs. He worked on projects for the American Association of Museums and the Institute of Museum Studies. He also has served as President of the Mountain Top Arboretum in Tannersville, N.Y. since 1998.

Jack Clasen brings a varied background to AIB. After receiving a doctoral degree in community health from Indiana University, he began his career as a college professor, then small business owner, community volunteer, and master gardener. He has been with AIB since its inception. Before retiring to Raleigh, he lived in the Cincinnati area where he co-founded and chaired the local beautification committee and the annual "Art in the Garden" tour. His own yard was voted one of the 10 best in the tri-state region, was filmed by HGTV, and featured in *Cincinnati Magazine*. Jack served many years as co-chair of AIB's national awards program and currently serves as secretary of the AIB board. He has judged more than 75 communities in the United States, Canada, Scotland and Ireland.

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.