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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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America in Bloom Executive Director

America in Bloom Judges to Visit King City, California

Professional volunteer judges from the America in Bloom (AIB) national awards program will visit King City, Calif., June 7-8. This is King City's first 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.

King City joins Tavares, Fl., Dyer, Ind. and Ottawa, Ill. In the 13,000-18,000 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 Sue Amatangelo and Laurie Waller.



Sue Amatangelo



Laurie Waller

Sue Amatangelo brings a well-rounded background to America in Bloom. Sue became a Master Gardener for the University of Illinois where she won the Illinois Outstanding Master Gardener Award. Sue is currently the Midwest, Northeast, and Eastern Canada sales manager for EuroAmerican Propagators, founder of the leading plant brand, Proven Winners. Her previous position as brand manager was with Park Seed, a division of JPPA which includes Jackson & Perkins, Wayside Gardens and Van Dyke's Restorers. She has also worked for the Ball Horticultural Company as the national retail accounts manager. In 2010 Sue accepted the position of Director for Home & Garden Showplace, the independent garden center division of the True Value Company. Since 2000, Sue has been a plan commissioner for the city of St. Charles, Ill. and prior to that sat on the zoning board of appeals. She is a horticulture superintendent of the Kane County (Ill) Fair, a past board member of the Garden Centers of America and the University of Illinois Kane County Council. Sue is a member of the American Planning Association (APA), the Garden Writers Association (GWA) and the American Horticulture Society (AHS), and Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators (SCBWI). Sue is the author of *Absolutely Beautiful Containers* and has written a children's book on gardening. She is an active speaker, a guest on radio shows, a writer for both industry and consumer magazines and a guest speaker for the Epcot International Flower and Garden Festival. An America in Bloom judge since 2010, Sue helped to bring her own community of St. Charles, Ill. into the AIB program for 2015 and Greenwood, S.C., her adopted home, for 2016.

After 25 years as a teacher, Laurie Waller retired and moved to Arroyo Grande, Calif., where her husband Richard was born and raised. The Waller family were flower seed growers throughout the twentieth century. Curious about coastal California horticulture, Laurie began volunteering with the local America In Bloom group, Arroyo Grande In Bloom. In 2009, Laurie took over as floral displays chairperson for the group and established the current floral displays program in Arroyo Grande. While planning and executing three plantings a year during an extended period of severe drought, Laurie completed the University of California Master Gardener program, where she currently volunteers as a helpline consultant. Under Laurie's stewardship, the floral displays program has flourished and been recognized for top honors within AIB. Additionally, Laurie developed and fostered a relationship with local commercial greenhouse growers who donate more than 90 percent of plant material used in the container and basket program in floral displays. Laurie also runs a successful business, is a board member and officer of the local business association, and a board member for Arroyo Grande In Bloom.

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.