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## PRESS RELEASE

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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America in Bloom Executive Director

### **America in Bloom Judges to Visit Madisonville, Kentucky**

Professional volunteer judges from the America in Bloom (AIB) national awards program will visit Madisonville, Ky. on June 12-13. This is Madisonville'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.

Madisonville joins Greenwood, S.C.; 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 Douglas Airhart.



*Bruce Riggs*



*Douglas Airhart*

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.

Douglas Airhart has served as a professor of horticulture in the School of Agriculture at Tennessee Tech University in Cookeville for 23 years. He teaches courses in floriculture, landscaping, production practices for trees, shrubs, turf and flowers, and provides FFA training and contests in nursery and floriculture. He has served on the Chamber's City Beautification committee for a decade. He is a certified arborist and municipal specialist. He managed the Arboretum Certification Program of the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council and provides assistance to regional tree boards. He has published numerous articles on consumer horticulture and tree care technologies, and has coordinated many grant projects about tree care and maintenance.

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.