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## PRESS RELEASE

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Laura A. Kunkle

America in Bloom Executive Director

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

Professional volunteer judges from the America in Bloom (AIB) national awards program will visit Lexington, Kentucky on June 19-20. This is Lexington's third 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.

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 Karin Rindal and Douglas Airhart.



Karin Rindal



Douglas Airhart

**Karin Rindal's** wide ranging business career in manufacturing and government includes time involved in international trade program evaluation and training in Total Quality Management (TQM) and Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. In 2004 Karin discovered the New Jersey Master Gardener program. She was appointed to the Board of Directors at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum in Morristown, NJ, where she organized annual plant sales and coordinated activities of volunteer committees including donations, raffle, and publicity and print materials.

Karin has won awards at the New Jersey Home and Garden Show for container design and for horticultural entries at the Newport, RI Flower Show. For two years she wrote a regular weekly garden column for the Millburn/Short Hills Patch. Since 2005 she has taught gardening and cooking classes to adults and children.

After a trip to Germany to do on-site research and photography, her most recent lecture involves the herbs and gardens of medieval cleric, Hildegard Von Bingen. Karin currently volunteers at the US Botanic Garden where she has assisted with a broad variety of educational events, including presenting a class on sustainable container gardening. Through her work at the Botanic Garden on the Sustainable Sites Initiative™ (SITES) she completed the requirements for the New Jersey Environmental Stewardship program. Karin's career began with a degree in Political Science and German, with a minor in French, followed by a Master's Degree from Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies.

**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.