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America in Bloom Judges to Visit Lewisburg, WV

Judges from the America in Bloom (AIB) national awards program will visit Lewisburg on July 8 and 9. This is Lewisburg's second entry in the America in Bloom national awards program. The town is one of 42 towns across America working on local revitalization programs with the hopes of receiving a prestigious America in Bloom national award.

Lewisburg is competing against West Columbia, TX; Brewton, AL; and Catskill, NY in the 3500 to 6000 population category.

All participants are evaluated in the following areas: overall impression, heritage preservation, environmental efforts, urban forestry, landscapes, floral displays, and community involvement. The judges evaluate these criteria in the residential, commercial, and municipal sectors.

Judges are Linda Cromer and Melanie Riggs.



Linda Cromer



Melanie Riggs

Linda Cromer has served her community, Greendale, Indiana, in a variety of political positions including Planning Commissioner, Chairperson of the Park Board and Tree Board, and Housing Authority Commissioner. She sits on the Executive Boards and plays an active role in the efforts of several national and state non-profit organizations dedicated to social justice and environmental issues.

Linda, who received a fine arts education at the University of Kansas, learned to love gardening at her grandmother's knee. Owner and operator of a floral shop and greenhouse for over a decade, she has spent the bulk of her professional life traveling as an international representative for a labor organization, and has used those travel opportunities to audit design and horticulture classes at a number of universities, and to study the diversity and individuality of public gardens and the communities where they are located.

Linda is past president and active member of the local Garden Club and spearheaded her community's first participation in the America in Bloom Program in 2005.

Melanie Riggs, New Rochelle, New York, began her career as a horticulturist for the Wildcliff Museum Greenhouses where she worked as the greenhouse Exhibitions Director for many years. Melanie graduated from the University of Vermont with a degree in Plant Science and Botany. She subsequently has studied Landscape Design and has graduate coursework in Botany.

Her passion for plants and gardens compliments her passion for travel. Melanie has traveled extensively throughout Europe, South and Central America, Southeast Asia, North Africa and North America.

Participants have opportunities to receive recognition in the following areas:

- Bloom rating
- Population category winner
- Outstanding achievement award – the “best of the best” over all participants in each of the six evaluated criteria
- Special mention – for what the judges deem to be an extraordinary project or program.
- Special awards
- Population category winners are invited to participate in international competition via the Communities in Bloom program in Canada.
- Community Champion
- YouTube Video Award

To date, more than 240 towns and cities from 41 states have participated in the program and more than 20 million people have been touched by it. Awards will be announced on September 26 at AIB’s National Symposium and Awards, held this year in Holland, MI.

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America in Bloom is an independent non-profit 501c3 corporation. America in Bloom envisions communities across the country as welcoming and vibrant places to live, work, and play – benefiting from colorful plants and trees; enjoying clean environments; celebrating heritage; and planting pride through volunteerism.

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