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America in Bloom Judges to Visit Venice, FL

Judges from the America in Bloom (AIB) national awards program will visit Venice on May 7 and 8. This is Venice'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.

Venice is competing against Winter Park, FL; Hammond, LA; and Calabasas, CA in the 20,000 to 30,000 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 Marlborough Packard and Lisa Netherland.



Marlborough Packard



Lisa Netherland

Marlborough B. Packard is a retired Professor of Historic Preservation from the Savannah College of Art and Design in Georgia; he began teaching at the college in 1992. Professor Packard holds a B.A. degree in art education from Adelphi University, an M.A. in art education from Hofstra University and an M.F.A in historic preservation from the Savannah College of Art and Design. He has been active in the preservation of the built and natural environment since 1963, both as a consultant and as a developer of historic properties.

His expertise includes graveyard preservation and conservation, decorative arts, preservation technology, nonprofit management, material culture studies, community redevelopment and he is a practicing artist specializing in painting and relief sculpture. A committed environmentalist, Professor Packard lives in The State of Maine for three months each year in a home he designed and built which functions without electricity, minimal gray water discharge, and features a solar assisted composting toilet. The surrounding landscape is 100 percent xeriscaped and produces thirty to forty quarts of wild blueberries each year.

Lisa Netherland, from Fayetteville, Arkansas, is a free-lance garden designer and horticultural consultant specializing in preserving and improving biodiversity. Previously serving as Lead Horticulturist for the City of Fayetteville she designed and managed four acres of public gardens as well as initiating and directing successful volunteer and community garden programs.

Devoted to community, Lisa started and co-chaired Fayetteville's America in Bloom program from 2002-2004. She served on the Board of Directors for the Ozark Botanical Garden for two separate terms where she initiated a volunteer program, helped to plant a native species meadow and submitted an award-winning design for a Native Plant Home Demonstration garden.

A graduate of the University of Arkansas in Landscape Design and Urban Horticulture and an ISA Certified Arborist, Lisa is dedicated to education and environmental stewardship. In addition to teaching Master Gardener classes she presents horticulture programs covering topics such as Sustainable Gardening Practices, Invasive Species Removal/Habitat Restoration, Gardening for Birds and Year-Round Gardening.

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

After the awards, participants also receive a detailed, written evaluation.

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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