



MEDIA RELEASE

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Echo, OR WINS America in Bloom National 2013 Awards

(COLUMBUS, OH): After months of anxious waiting, top honors for the prestigious 2013 America in Bloom national awards program were announced at the annual awards held in Orlando, Florida on September 21.

America in Bloom executive director, Laura Kunkle, said, “America in Bloom is helping participants of all types achieve their potential. The accomplishments and progress shown by this year's towns and cities is remarkable.”

Echo earned a four bloom rating and is the overall winner in the under 4,000 population category. This achievement has earned them a prestigious place among the America in Bloom “Circle of Champions”.

Echo was judged on six criteria: overall impression, environmental awareness, heritage, urban forestry, landscape, and floral displays, across four sectors: municipal, residential, commercial, and community involvement.

Alex Pearl and Dwight Lund, two specially trained AIB judges, visited towns of similar populations and spent two days touring each town, meeting municipal officials, residents, and volunteers. Other competitors in the under 4,000 population category included Castle Rock, WA; Gallipolis, OH; and Slippery Rock, PA.

Pearl and Lund were very taken by the city’s overall impression and commented, “Echo’s downtown revitalization renovation plan took over 5 years to go from dream to plan to implementation. The completed renovation of sidewalks, planters, benches, lighting, and landscaping has brought a new vitality to the community and spurred it into new directions. Former residents are returning to continue their lives in the community. New businesses are seeing opportunities. They are moving in to recently restored buildings that served the community for so many years and have been renovated for the next generation. Residents are energized. Echo stands out in Umatilla County and Eastern Oregon as a community that because of the energies they exhibit they will have many more generations of residents contribute to the community’s vitality as a place to live, work and raise a family.”

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Congratulations to Echo!

Registrations for the 2014 national awards program can be submitted until February 28, 2014. Eligible participants include towns, cities, college and university campuses, business districts, military installations, and recognized neighborhoods of large cities.

America in Bloom is an independent, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. 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. For more information, visit www.americainbloom.org.

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