



MEDIA RELEASE

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For more information, contact Laura Kunkle

lkunkle@ofa.org

614-487-1117

West Chicago, IL America in Bloom National 2013 Awards Results Announced

(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.”

West Chicago received a three bloom rating and a special mention for their efforts in Urban Forestry.

West Chicago 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.

Jack Clasen and Jim Sutton, 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 25,001 to 30,000 category were Kent, OH; Wake Forest, NC, and Winter Park, FL.

Clasen and Sutton were impressed with West Chicago's efforts in the area of urban forestry and commented, “The Parks Department is doing an amazing job of recovering from a disastrous storm that had West Chicago as its epicenter and destroyed thousands of trees just one year ago. The Reed-Keppler Park took the hardest single hit losing 163 trees, almost 16% of its tree canopy. This is the oldest of the parks and the largest with 118 acres. The city's approach to dealing with this magnitude of a disaster have been very creative and inspiring. Whimsical faces have been carved in the trunks still standing and much of the fallen wood has been repurposed to create furniture and accessories. The storm damage was well documented, assessed and a detailed reforestation plan was written, approved and is being implemented.”

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Congratulations to West Chicago!

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 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.

For more information, visit www.americainbloom.org.

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