



For immediate release.

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### **America in Bloom Judges to Visit Belpre, OH**

Professional volunteer judges from the America in Bloom (AIB) national awards program will visit Belpre, OH on June 13 and 14. This is Belpre's fifth 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 2013 and 2014, Belpre won AIB's outstanding achievement award for community involvement. In 2015, Belpre received a special award for "Most Attractive Welcome to Our City".

Belpre joins Brewton, AL; Logan, OH; and Kimberly, WI in the 5,000 to 10,000 population category.

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 Award

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, landscaped areas, urban forestry, floral displays, and community involvement in the municipal, commercial and residential sectors.

The judging team members are Evelyn Alemanni and Barbara Vincentsen.



Evelyn Alemanni



Barbara Vincentsen

**Evelyn Alemanni** is a self-employed writer and award winning gardener from Elfin Forest, California. She has judged for the America in Bloom program since 2003 and also serves as an international judge for the Canadian Communities in Bloom program and for the international LivCom Awards; experiences which Evelyn says has given her the opportunity to share wonderful ideas and inspirations with communities in many countries, and to build networks of people committed to improving their hometowns. She has judged more than 150 towns in 10 countries. Evelyn first vice president and chairs its external relations committee. She is the creator/author/designer of the Ten Years of Best Ideas book and donated the rights to the book to AIB. In 2014, she has released her four-volume book series, Fleurs du Jour which features bouquets made every day with flowers from her garden and four special volumes, Caladiums, Roses, Bouquets from the Bulb Garden and Succulent Bouquets. In 2001, Good Morning America named Evelyn's garden one of the five best in the U.S. San Diego Home/Garden Lifestyles has twice named it one of its gardens of the year. Garden Ideas and Outdoor Living featured it on its cover. It has also been in Garden Shed; Better Homes and Gardens; Gardens, Decks and Landscapes and many other garden-related magazines.

**Barbara Vincentsen** is owner of Vincentsen Associates, a medium-sized award-winning architectural firm in Westfield, New Jersey. She grew up in a gardening family and has continued her family tradition in her own gardens, which have plantings shared from three generations of close family and friends. Her Westfield garden was featured in the 2010 America in Bloom program in Westfield.

Barbara is a licensed architect in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York, and is a licensed professional planner and certified interior designer in New Jersey. She is actively involved in her community, serving on the boards of the Friends of Mindowaskin Park Committee and Fairview Cemetery Committee. She is a member of the Westfield Service League and Downtown Westfield Corporation Design Committee, and a past president of Central Section of New Jersey Chapter of the AIA.

To date, nearly 250 communities from 41 states have participated in the program and more than 22 million people have been touched by it. Awards will be announced on October 6-8, 2016 at AIB's National Symposium and Awards, held this year in Arroyo Grande, CA.

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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