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### **America in Bloom Judges to Visit Newark, N.J.**

Professional volunteer judges from the America in Bloom (AIB) national awards program will visit the Downtown District of Newark, N.J. on July 11 and 12. This is Newark Downtown District's first 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.

Newark Downtown District joins Lexington, Ky. in the above-50,000 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 Meg Whitmer and Katy Moss Warner.



Meg Whitmer



Katy Moss Warner

**Meg Whitmer** is a Florida licensed landscape architect with a lifelong commitment to beautification, conservation, environmental education and stewardship. A professional landscape architect for over 30 years, Meg's work spans the entire state of Florida. Dedicated to protecting "our most cherished natural resource, WATER," Meg focuses on projects in urban coastal and watershed areas. Her passion for beautification was sparked early in her life: her mother and grandmother were active garden club members. As a Life Member of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, she continues their legacy by promoting youth and community gardening, volunteering her time at her local community garden. In 2006, she organized an America In Bloom campaign in Stuart, Fla. The City of Stuart won the top AIB award in its population category in 2008. Meg is a member of the Florida Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, Florida Nursery Growers and Landscapers Association, Florida Association of Native Nurseries, Florida Earth Foundation, Tampa Garden Club, Tampa Heights Civic Association, Tampa Heights Community Garden, serves on the City of Tampa Architecture Review Commission and is a member of the Mayor's Neighborhood University program. She currently divides her time between Tampa and Florida's southeast coast, serving clients throughout the central and southern regions of Florida.

**Katy Moss Warner** is President Emeritus of the American Horticultural Society (AHS), a national, non-profit, member-based organization with the vision of "making America a nation of gardeners, a land of gardens." Katy was Director of Disney's Horticulture and Environmental Initiatives at the Walt Disney World Resort in Florida, responsible for the landscapes of four theme parks, 15 resort properties and over 70 miles of roads on the 30,500-acre property. For 24 years - from 1976 to 2000 - she provided the leadership necessary to ensure that Disney's horticultural traditions of beautiful gardens and themed landscapes were sustained. Katy has traveled extensively and has hosted garden tours in Italy, England, Belgium, Czech Republic, Argentina, Morocco as well as many destinations within the US. Katy judges for America in Bloom and international competitions. She is a Longwood Fellow with Longwood Gardens and the University of Delaware as well as a Loeb Fellow with the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

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, Calif.

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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