

Good Things are Growing in Greendale

By Linda Cromer

Call them stream of consciousness success stories: Problems offer possibilities become plans propel progress produce pride.....that's the way we think in AIB-centric Greendale, Indiana.



Sign at Greendale town hall

Case in point: Take an eyesore of a rundown dairy mart dealing mainly in lottery tickets and candy-wrapper litter situated across a parking lot from the city utility offices. Factor in the mayor, clerk treasurer and her assistant operating out of a second-story non-ADA compliant office with a leaky roof three blocks away. Problems offer possibilities.

Dairy Mart owes back taxes. Sheriff's sale offers a progressive city council an opportunity to acquire the ugly duckling for little more than "egg money." Heroic city workers gear up and gut the building. Sympathetic engineering firm partners with city to hatch drawings for new offices and meeting rooms with state-of-the art technology and environmentally-friendly features. Possibilities become plans.

Local builder comes in on time and within budget. AIB committee invests in large planters to span street side length of building and enhance front façade. Garden Club develops planting scheme, buys floral material and installs it. AIB water girl adds the new planters to her photo-op watering repertoire. Civic engagement is lookin' good. Plans propel progress.

That ugly duckling developed into a swan that spread its wings to welcome residents and state officials in time to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the State of Indiana. Everything went swimmingly. Progress produces pride.

The stars line up for projects such as these when you keep your focus, and Greendale has been focused on the America in Bloom program since 2005. We have story after story of achievements large and small, because we now frame our thinking around the potential for improvement that AIB



encourages by looking at ourselves through the lens of the AIB criteria. We still have stars in our eyes after twelve consecutive years of participation.

America in Bloom has become a part of OUR story, Greendale’s story. The continuing narrative of our successes through collaborative effort gave the AIB Committee a seat at the table and a big voice in developing the City of Greendale 2013 Comprehensive Plan – and it’s not a document that just gathers dust on a shelf in a closet. We use it every day as we work toward a better future for our kids and grandkids. It’s hard to quantify what our efforts have meant, but Economic Director Al Abdon is quick to point out, “Success in attracting new business, new residents, and new energy are, in part, direct results of the innovative efforts and quality of life impact that America in Bloom has had for Greendale.”



Hanging Baskets in Greendale



About the Author:



Linda Cromer has served her community, Greendale, Indiana, in a variety of political positions including Planning Commissioner, Chairperson of the Park Board and Tree Board, and Housing Authority Commissioner. She sits on the Executive Boards and plays an active role in the efforts of several national and state non-profit organizations dedicated to social justice and environmental issues.

Linda, who received a fine arts education at the University of Kansas, learned to love gardening at her grandmother's knee. Owner and operator of a floral shop and greenhouse for over a decade, she has spent the bulk of her professional life traveling as an international representative for a labor organization, and has used those travel opportunities to audit design and horticulture classes at a number of universities, and to study the diversity and individuality of public gardens and the communities where they are located.

Linda is past president and active member of the local Garden Club and spearheaded her community's first participation in the America in Bloom Program in 2005.

