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Estes Park enters *America in Bloom* and *Communities in Bloom* contests

For the third consecutive year, Estes Park will participate in the *America in Bloom* program, as well as the international component, *Communities in Bloom*. The community was entered into the contests by the Town of Estes Park and YMCA of the Rockies. The *Communities in Bloom* judges will tour Estes Park July 7 and *America in Bloom* judges will tour Estes Park July 9 and 10. Community members and businesses are invited to become involved at the ground level. To kick off the 2015 program, the steering committee is encouraging residents and businesses to enter a photo contest for landscaping projects – current or from a past season. The committee will choose a winner among the resident and business categories. Winners will be visited by the steering committee and the *America in Bloom* judges on July 10. Photos will also be compiled into a Facebook album with photo credit. Submit photos for consideration to Suzanna Simpson at ssimpson@estes.org no later than June 19 at 5 p.m.

For the 2015 *America in Bloom* entry, the community has been advanced to the mid-sized category as well as the Circle of Champions and will be competing against Arroyo Grande, CA, Washington, MO and Holland, MI. For its first entry in 2013, Estes Park received three national *America in Bloom* awards; the nationwide winner in its population category of 4,001-7,000 residents, outstanding achievement award for “Landscaped Areas” and a special award for “Most Effective Use of Bold Foliage.” For its second entry in 2014, the community was honored as the nationwide winner in its population category of 4,001-7,000 residents with a four out of five “bloom rating” and a special mention for overall impression as a result of the extensive flood recovery efforts. Due to its many achievements, the community of Estes Park also advanced to *America in Bloom*’s prestigious Circle of Champions, becoming the newest community in the program to receive that honor.

In addition, Estes Park has entered *Communities in Bloom*, an international program committed to fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility and beautification through community involvement, with a focus on enhancing green spaces in communities. Like *America in Bloom*, this program offers on-site, one-on-one mentoring and coaching by a team of judges, with participation from communities in the United States, Canada, Asia and several European countries. Estes Park has been accepted into the competition as a mid-sized community and will be competing against Ahogill County of Antrim, Northern Ireland, UK; Municipality of Jasper, Alberta, Canada; Town of Stettler, Alberta, Canada and City of Trail, British Columbia, Canada.

America in Bloom is a non-profit, nationwide program promoting beautification through education and community involvement, while utilizing flowers, plants, trees, and other lifestyle enhancements. Locally known as *Estes Park in Bloom*, the project is a community-wide effort involving businesses, residents and Town government. *America in Bloom* is the only organization of its kind offering an award program with on-site, one-on-one mentoring and coaching by a team of expert judges who will provide the local committee with a detailed, written evaluation following its visit. The evaluation is based upon six criteria: floral displays, urban forestry, landscaped areas, heritage preservation, environmental efforts, and the overall impression/cleanliness of the community.

Since *America in Bloom* was founded in 2001, more than 230 cities in 45 states have participated. For more information or to become involved in the *Estes Park in Bloom* project, contact Keri Kelly at 970-577-3782 or email kkelly@estes.org. To receive Town news and/or meeting agendas in your email inbox, please visit www.estes.org. More Town news is available at www.facebook.com/townofestesparkco and www.twitter.com/townofestespark.

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