

CIB 2011 Report

These four ladies, Connie Larson, Marlene Cornelius, Linda Schetzle, and Loverna Heistad, attended the 2011 Communities in Bloom Banquet and Awards Presentation in Forestburg, on September 17. Veteran was awarded three blooms for their efforts this year (up from 2 last year). We achieved a total of 723 points out of a maximum 1000 (last year 552): TIDINESS: 108.5/150, ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION: 103.5/150, HERITAGE CONSERVATION: 104/150, URBAN FORESTRY: 121/175, LANDSCAPE: 151/200, and FLORAL DISPLAYS: 135/175. Veteran was also given a mention for edible landscape. There were lush vegetable gardens in most yards. Congratulations to the organizers, and to all residents who helped make our village very attractive.

GENERAL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS:

We were very impressed with everyone we met on Veteran's CIB committee. What an enthusiastic, hard working group. We enjoyed your hospitality and the fact that you enjoy working together.

We noted that the village restored its village office to its former glory and the owners of the neighbouring building followed your lead.

The trip around town with the Percherons and the people mover was perfect. It was high enough to allow us to see in many yards and slow enough that we took in all the sights without feeling rushed.

Placing articles in the Veteran Eagle has ensured that residents of Veteran know what the local Communities in Bloom is doing and what you are trying to accomplish.

TIDINESS

Observations:

Veteran is a tidy community. It has a number of groups that insure that loose garbage is picked up.

Thanks for letting us know that you are working to revamp your by-laws to insure that weeds and unsightly yards are cleaned. This will hopefully help to improve the messiest yards.

We noted that some of your worst offenders have started to clean their yards. While they still have some work to do it is an improvement. Hopefully these people will continue to follow your lead.

Recommendations:

While loose trash was at a minimum we think that it would improve further if there were more garbage receptacles around town.

We noticed that one building on Waterloo had a broken window and jagged glass. This is a safety hazard. The glass should either be replaced, or the window boarded up.

Removal of derelict buildings will improve the look of your town. We noted that one is scheduled for demolition.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

Observations:

We noted that Millenium Park and a few residences had underground sprinkler systems which helps with water conservation.

The many gardeners within the town who use water barrels to water their gardens are to be commended.

The auction mart recycles its waste by composting and spreading the compost on local farmers' fields.

Recommendations:

The town is looking for a suitable area to set aside to compost grass clippings. What a great idea.

We suggest that residents may wish to start composting piles in their own yards. A good way to encourage this is to hold a composting workshop. This would give people the information they need to determine if they want to follow this route.

Excess cardboard has proposed a challenge for your recycling program. Is it possible to place a bin or large canvas bag behind the store for cardboard? This would free room in the general bin for plastic and tin cans.

Policies on environmental standards will help direct better environmental action in the village in the future.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Observations:

The restoration of the Village Office was worthwhile. It has made a difference in the appearance of Waterloo Street.

The heritage gardens in Millennium Park contained heritage plants. Obtaining the plants from established, long term gardens was a great idea. A job well done.

Caragana and lilac hedges have always been part of rural Alberta and are thriving in Veteran.

We were unable to see the museum as there were problems with the building.

We were happy to see a number of older homes that have been renovated and expect that future judges will see more.

You have spent many hours compiling a history book of your area. We are sure you are looking forward to it arriving in town.

We were impressed with the description of Christmas Capers. What a wonderful community activity. It is also a good place to showcase CIB.

Recommendations:

You are celebrating your 100th anniversary next summer. A walking tour of the town that gives people an idea of the history of older buildings might prove popular. It could be as simple as developing a self guided tour brochure.

At the present time you do not have heritage policies. Developing policies might help in preserving older sustainable buildings. It would make it easier to decide which buildings to keep and which to demolish.

Special Areas has been working towards placing buildings on the Provincial Heritage list. You have buildings that would qualify. One that comes to mind is the old Shell garage. We understand that it is a lengthy time-consuming procedure and we suggest that you talk to Heather, Special Areas contact in Consort.

URBAN FORESTRY

Observations:

We were very impressed that you have completed a tree inventory that contains many different varieties of trees. Making a simple list of what trees and shrubs are growing in the village would be helpful to others who are wanting to plant trees.

Removing older trees that are at the end of their life cycle and replacing them with new ones can be controversial but it is something that you have accomplished. Planting 70 trees in one year is very ambitious.

We noted that a poplar across from the school has a broken branch that is a hazard.

Recommendations:

You had your summer students prune the hedge at the cemetery. We suggest that next time the hedge is pruned it should be cut back to the ground. This will remove all the older stumps and allow the plants to grow from the roots.

We suggest that you get elm beetle traps to put in the elm trees to insure that your trees do not become infected with Dutch Elm Disease.

Leaving a depression or well around newly planted trees will allow the person who waters to give the trees adequate water. The larger the well, the more water it will hold. Remember that most of the trees feeder roots are in the top 12 inches of the soil.

Placing mulch around the tree will keep the area moist, eliminate weeds and ensure that weed whippers stay away from the trunk.

The following web sites might be helpful in getting funding to plant trees.
<http://www.treecanada.ca> <http://www.green-street.ca>

LANDSCAPE

Observations:

We were impressed with the general landscape sustainability. Mulch helps retain soil moisture as well as helping to suppress weeds.

Millennium Park is a wonderful place. It is not surprising that it is well used.

We also like the new park that is being finished beside the village office. Once the ground is level it will make a comfortable place to sit.

We noted many edible gardens (vegetable gardens) around town.

Future judges will have the pleasure of seeing the new park at the corner of Balaclava and Highway 884.

The murals have added to the overall landscape and look of Waterloo Street.

Recommendations:

We noted that many of the businesses cleaned up their lots with herbicide to kill weeds. Once the plants are dead they should be removed.

At the car wash we noted that the lack of grass by the back of the building due to herbicide spray has resulted in erosion when it rains.

The flowerbed at the school was very cheerful. You may wish to look into the website www.evergreen.ca which provides information on developing outdoor garden classrooms for schools.

FLORAL DISPLAYS**Observations:**

Your self-watering planters work very well and require less man hours to water than other types of planters. You may wish to store these indoors for the winter to extend their life span.

Pots of flowering plants brightened up the main street and other areas of the village.

We were impressed with the businesses that supported CiB with floral displays. All the pots looked great.

Recommendations:

Flower pots are attractive but they are time consuming. Be sure that you do not over extend your volunteers by adding too many. If you add more, do so slowly and think hard before adding baskets as they require even higher maintenance.