

News From Communities in Bloom

Linda Schetzle

The CiB summer and fall season has drawn to a close but we would like to share with you the results of Judging Day, and also the Judges' comments about our community with regard to each category. We hope that this will give everyone a better understanding of what CiB is about and how we can all work to improve our results next year. We are also pleased to say that, with the aid of Town Council, six large self-watering planters have been purchased, and various other ideas are in the works for spring!

"The welcome provided to the judges, including a horse drawn wagon tour of the village that attracted most of its residents, was an excellent example of truly unique and genuine western hospitality.

General Comments and Suggestions

We appreciated being towed on a wagon around the village by Boots and Diamond, Fred's black Percheron horses. It appeared that half the population joined us on the 'hop on, hop off, stop on request' itinerary. Fred the coachman was a wealth of information, an excellent driver and was much attuned to his beautiful equines. Thank you for this uniquely western experience. The Veteran Eagle, published weekly on Thursdays is an abundant source of local information for residents and supports the CIB programme. The Lions Club is also very active. A page for CIB activities and announcements should be posted on the Veteran website. The Community Profile Book was neatly presented for a first effort. However, topics addressed only three out of the eight Judging Criteria.

Tidiness

Parks and grounds appeared to be in good condition helped by the above normal precipitation this year. There were no signs of graffiti and vandalism. However, some properties and derelict buildings were very weedy.

The Veteran Eagle publishes timely topics on noxious weeds. Keep this important information on weed identification current and active.

Environmental Awareness

The Veteran Eagle is publishing good information about environmental topics such as Dutch Elm Disease symptoms and noxious weeds. We encourage the greater use of mulches. Tree clippings from pruning of branches and dead trees could be used if a shredder could be rented by the Town, perhaps on a cost share basis with other communities. The CIB Committee should consider having workshops to address topics such as xeriscaping, noxious weeds and the use of drought tolerant and native plants at their monthly meetings and for this information to be published in the Veteran Eagle and on the Veteran website.

Community Involvement

The Lions Club is invaluable to this community. They provide funding, volunteers and gifts in kind to the playground, the Cemetery, the Lions campground and the Millennium Park. Consider having a 'Front Yard recognition' for residents and 'Best Business Frontage' for the business/commercial section to promote CIB awareness in the town.

Natural and Cultural Heritage Conservation

It is good there have been two history books already published and that a third one is slated for publication in time for the 2012 Homecoming. The Veteran Eagle publishes a weekly column 'Back in History' each week - good information for the young people in this community. We saw some original old photographs of rural schools at the Veteran Community Hall. Some of these photographs have been incorporated into the aforementioned history books. We learned that for some, the original in the Hall is the only one. Consider making copies of all these photographs for archival purposes and keep these archives in a safe location that is fire and waterproof.

Tree / Urban Forest Management

We recognize the value of gradually replacing cottonwoods and elms with lower maintenance species such as ash. The Village Foreman is offered professional development opportunities but scheduling is a problem with his other work as a farmer. It is unfortunate that this one Foreman is assisted by only two summer students that are responsible for all pruning. Tree prunings and grass clippings are sent to the landfill instead of being usefully used for mulch in this normally semi arid environment. Consider cost sharing the rental of a tree clipper/shredder with other communities and having a place that residents can deposit yard waste for compost. A Tree Inventory should also be initiated with a reserve nursery of suitably adapted trees.

Landscaped Areas

The Lions Club have done a good job with the Millennium Park and playground. More heritage perennials should be added to the Park as resources permit. The cairn at the Lions campground is being revitalized by the CIB volunteers. Keep up this endeavour. Consider a top dressing of red shade or mulch around its perimeter. The entrance sign coming from the west off Highway 12 needs more colour. We suggest adding colorful shrubs such as dogwoods.

Floral Displays

The flower bed in front of the Veteran school was nicely planted by the children. We encourage the CIB Committee to purchase some recycled bins from the seed companies, plant them with annuals and sell them to residents and businesses as a fundraiser for CIB projects.

Turf and Groundcovers

The grounds near Veteran School were in good condition with the overabundance of rain this growing season. It is good that grass clippings are left after mowing the parks areas, but mowing height for this semi arid area should be higher, and cutting less frequent."