

In Bloom Countdown Underway

By Candice Conti

The countdown has begun. With 140 days left until the big culminating event, volunteers from Arroyo Grande in Bloom, local business owners and city council members rallied together to welcome two judges from America in Bloom with a picnic luncheon at Heritage Square Gardens on Monday.

This is the first time the city of Arroyo Grande has participated in the

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nationwide competition. For the past six years, America in Bloom (AIB) has been helping communities throughout the country to better themselves. According to literature posted on the AIB web site, past participants have experienced numerous optimistic changes including increased civic pride, community involvement, amplified tourism and improved overall ambiance.

Arroyo Grande resident and horticulturist Karen Frank who had heard about the contest and thought it might be a good idea for Arroyo Grande to get involved spurred the city's involvement.

"I've always been charmed by our city," she said. "I thought it would be a good way to get our community together."

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The Arroyo Grande in Bloom Committee and America in Bloom judges enjoy a luncheon at Heritage Square Gardens in the Village of Arroyo Grande

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Eager to tell others about the contest, Frank approached Village Improvement Association President, Bob Lund, who was "very interested" thus beginning the undertaking of the Arroyo Grande in Bloom (AGIB) project.

"It will be good for all of us," explained Vivian Krug, publicist and webmaster for AGIB. "It is a good way to bring people together, and there is always room to improve your city no matter how great it is."

Wanting to make this event true to the community, the committee for AGIB rallied the support of city council members who, according to Krug, "unani-

mously said yes" and then recruited citizen committees and local business that all ecstatically jumped on the bandwagon.

"It has truly been a comprehensive undertaking," said Arroyo Grande Mayor Tony Ferrara. "This is a demonstration of how volunteers, community and the city came together and joined forces to support this project."

Arroyo Grande will compete against three other cities with the same population. They are Forest Park, Ohio, Frankford, Indiana and Red Wing, Minnesota.

Touring the City of Arroyo Grande May 7th and 8th, Judges Diane Clasen and Jim Corfield will evaluate the community based on eight different criteria

established by AIB.

- Tidiness
- Environmental Effort
- Community Involvement
- Heritage
- Urban Forestry
- Landscaped Areas
- Turf and Groundcovers
- Floral Displays

Win or lose, even after the contest is competed the projects will continue on. Every Saturday at 8 a.m. the committee for AGIB will meet and pick-up garbage throughout the city. Volunteers and sponsorship is needed to help keep Arroyo Grande beautiful and prepare for next year's AIB.

For more information, visit their web site at www.arroyo-grandeinbloom.org.