

Portsmouth gets botany award

By Mark Shaffer
Scioto Voice writer

Portsmouth has been awarded a national honor for its plant life and efforts to beautify the city.

In June, America in Bloom sent two judges to towns with 19,000-24,000 in population for two days to check out what they had done to add plants to an urban setting.

On Oct. 4, America in Bloom announced that the City of Portsmouth got a three bloom out of four bloom rating and a special mention for heritage preservation.

Sue Burke, the design chairperson with Main Street Portsmouth said she was really pleased with the results.

"We did really well for our first time," she said. "They have lots of suggestions on how we can improve."

Burke said that 133 communities from 21 states participated in the contest this year.

"So it is an uplifting experience to have everyone work together and make this a better place to live," she said.

Main Street Portsmouth does numerous cleanup projects throughout the year such as working with Shawnee State University students to clean up the municipal parking lot downtown.

They also plant flowers throughout Portsmouth including in front of the city building, the Roy Rogers Esplanade, in urns and flower pots in front of the Floodwall Murals, in the islands in the Fourth Street and Seventh Street parking lots, and flower pots along Market Street.

"A new thing this year is we put hanging flower baskets on Chillicothe streets and put black flower pots down on Second Street," Burke said. "So we actually have quite a lot going on."

The group also maintains the grass on the esplanade and Alexandria Park to keep it looking good and to help out the city.

"We pay for that out of the Paul Johnson Fund," Burke said, adding the fund pays for two people to water flowers and mow. "The city just can't keep up with everything, they don't have the money or the manpower. So we are trying to do our part to make Portsmouth a better place."

In their comments, the judges said that since 2015 is Portsmouth's bicentennial "it is truly an opportunity to bring the community together to celebrate its rich history. This will be a chance to show off the rich Appalachian roots of the community."