



# News Release

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## Town of Olds earns Five Blooms

24 September 2008, Olds, Alberta – The Town of Olds, a finalist in the International challenge – Small – category of the 2008 Edition of Communities in Bloom, received a Five-Bloom rating with a Special Mention for Community Partnerships. Olds tied with the winner of this category, Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia. The results of the International challenge were revealed at the annual Awards Ceremony on Saturday 20 September.

The CIB judges were impressed to see that the Town of Olds appreciates how every effort to improve its quality of life has such a positive impact on the community and requires contributions from all sectors. Furthermore, the Communities in Bloom Task Force recognizes that combining all the efforts of various groups and individuals to focus on a common goal results in a more efficient process. As a result, the CIB Task Force in Olds has successfully engineered remarkable partnerships among Town Council, businesses, churches, schools, not-for-profit groups and individuals that operate under the CIB umbrella. These partnerships have made and will continue to improve quality of life in Olds.

Stuart Ray, Director of Community Services for the Town of Olds says,

“Within the five-blooms rating there is a percentage range – we had a high percentage, so our ranking is like winning a silver medal at the Olympics...and there is nothing wrong with that! We can all be so proud of our accomplishments that we have achieved over the past year in our efforts to make Olds a great place in which to live and work.”

Communities in Bloom is a Canadian non-profit organization committed to fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility and beautification through community involvement and the challenge of a national program.

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**For more information:**

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## Communities in Bloom Backgrounder

**History.** Established with the guidance of Britain in Bloom, Tidy Towns of Ireland and *Villes et Villages Fleuris de France*, Communities in Bloom held its first edition in 1995 and 29 participating municipalities were honoured at the first awards ceremonies on Parliament Hill. The program now includes more than 500 municipalities across the country and an international challenge involving municipalities from the United States, Japan and several European countries allows participants to compete internationally.

**Program.** The program consists of municipalities receiving information and being evaluated either provincially or nationally by a jury of professionals on the accomplishments of their entire community (municipal, private, corporate and institutional sectors, citizens) on eight key criteria: *Tidiness, Environmental Awareness, Community Involvement, Natural and Cultural Heritage Conservation, Urban Forestry, Landscaped Areas, Floral Displays, and Turf & Ground Cover Areas.*

*Within the actual context of global warming and environmental challenges, all communities involved in the program can rightfully and proudly state that, through the efforts of all those involved in their communities, they are actually contributing to the solutions.*

**Benefits.** The pride, sense of community and feeling of accomplishment generated through participation are visible in municipalities all over Canada. These benefits make Communities in Bloom a program where everyone wins. Municipalities can benefit financially from the program through community tourism initiatives, business opportunities for the entire community, and other related projects. A valuable information exchange network allows communities to share accomplishments, best practices and projects.

**National Symposium on Parks and Grounds.** Held in conjunction with the annual national awards ceremonies, this event is a unique opportunity for elected officials, parks and grounds professionals and community volunteers to learn and share about current issues, trends and challenges not only in horticulture and gardening, but in community tourism and projects, environmental awareness, and much more. Workshops and awards ceremonies are also held in all provinces throughout the year.

A winter edition – **WinterLights Celebrations** – was created in 2001, featuring overall community efforts in the following categories: Winter Pleasures, Festive Celebrations, Visual Presentation, Goodwill Program and Tourism/Promotion.

**Congratulations to all finalists of the 14th National Edition of Communities in Bloom**