



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

The Town of Eastend has been working hard the past couple years to create a proud image for itself, putting added focus on tourism, environmental action and town beautification. The effort is paying off and the town was recently awarded at the provincial level by judges for Communities in Bloom.

Eastend wins provincial award through Communities in Bloom

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Maple Creek News

The Town of Eastend has been selling itself.

It's been a couple years since the tourism and economic focus in the town was turned up to high, and among other obvious benefits to this civic pride is a recent recognition by the Saskatchewan Communities in Bloom initiative.

With a score of '4 blooms' and a special mention for its relatively new community theme, Eastend was named the 2017 provincial winner for towns with populations of 501-1000.

"We are very happy about this," says Eastend's tourism co-ordinator Rosa Vazquez. "We started this campaign about two years ago with a new brochure and a new website (townofeastend.com) and it has just really taken off."

Communities in Bloom judges are definitely looking for the beauty and aesthetics the town provides, such as flowerbeds and landscaping — which the town showed well at — but a lot of the scoring comes from other criteria such as tourism and economic development efforts.

"We came out with a new theme, which is, 'Eastend: Discover a sanctuary for all your senses,'" Vazquez said. "We developed a new brochure and all our advertising is focused on what you can do, what you see, what you can touch when you come to Eastend.

"That's how we promote all our attractions in town now, we promote them around that theme."

It's paying off in a big way. Since entering into Communities in Bloom, the town has steadily built toward this year's recognition, with the entire community focused in some way on making Eastend all it can be.

"The judges were really impressed with what our community has to offer," Vazquez said. "Besides being a beautiful town, we have a lot of things for everyone to enjoy."

"For instance, if you're coming here in the summer, you can go golfing or to our new swimming pool and splash park — there is always activities in the town for the whole family to enjoy."

Judges for Communities in Bloom also look at what types of environmental actions are being undertak-

en, yet another criterion Eastend has made recent strides in. The town has implemented a composting program, offering containers to residents in the community.

The number of residents composting food waste steadily increased since the program took hold, and Vazquez says it has heightened the town's overall focus on recycling and the environment. She also highlighted the various groups that have taken their own initiatives to promote and care for the town.

"We have great community groups," Vazquez said. "For example, the garden club selected the flowers we were going to use this year ... so they came and planted the flowers around the Town Square and the main area.

"And then it was the Town workers that made sure they looked nice."

Vazquez says members of the community have taken notice and are doing the little things necessary to keep the town beautiful, such as removing fallen leaves or flowers that have died.

"The community taking care of the town, being very proud of what we have to offer."