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Essex in Bloom

Judges impressed by town's first competition

BY SARAH FISHER

A little strategizing may have earned Essex some points in the 2006 Communities in Bloom competition.

This year when the judges arrived to look over the community gardens and upkeep of the flowers and plants displayed throughout the commercial areas of Essex, they also considered another factor—Essex in Bloom.

This was the first year for the municipal competition, which is linked to the Communities in Bloom currently underway across Canada. Local residents and business owners were able to enter the Essex in Bloom competition by registering with the Essex Business Improvement Area by July 24. Judging took place the following day.

Gardens were judged according to five criteria: the impact from the street, the entrance way to the garden, if the garden was free of debris and weeds, the condition of the building and yards, and the orderliness of the garden, as well as the use of colour, texture and fragrance. Only front gardens were judged. Three local members of the Essex and District Horticultural Society, the club's president Kathy Hudak, Sandy Ellenor and Teresa Vermeulen, judged the contestants. "I think it went very well,"

BIA Manager Marlene Markham said July 26. "We got many more entries than we anticipated. It was about 25 entries which was pretty good for the first year."

There were six categories to the competition. The judges initially started with four categories and added two more—the residential complex category to accommodate the number of participants in town houses and apartments, and an "achievement" category. This year's achievement award was given to the residents of Maplewood Apartments for their work on the Maplewood Community Garden.

The winner of the non-residential award was G.L. Fraser and Associates at 25 Centre Street. The Amador Apartments on Irwin Avenue received first place in the residential complex category, the 200 block of Irwin Avenue was first in the best blooming street category, and Marilyn and Dennis Guilbeault won first place in the naturalized garden category for their garden at 302 Maidstone Avenue. The winner in the best blooming residential front yard category was Mary Lou Kwiatkowski for her front lawn at 71 Centre Street.

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Several storefronts in Essex are appealing to the firefighters that have started to arrive in town. Wendy's Family Creations on Talbot Street North has the Fireman's Prayer painted on the front window of their store. The 105th Fire Fighter's Association of Ontario convention is being held in Essex from Aug. 4-6.

Firefighters gather Public welcome to attend FFAO events

The 105th Fire Fighter's Association of Ontario convention has begun in Essex.

Classes in farm equipment extrication were held at the old Holy Name School on Talbot Street South July 31 and training courses will continue throughout the week until the convention gets into full swing on Friday.

Some of the firefighters are already staying at the temporary campground behind the school, where around 400

of their colleagues, along with family members, are expected to arrive by Aug. 4. The convention officially runs from Aug. 4-6.

Many of the events planned are open to the public.

The Hootenanny is the convention's opening get-together. It is scheduled to start at 6 p.m. Friday and run until 1 a.m. at Essex Memorial Arena. The featured band is Big Wiggle and there is a \$5 entry fee.

A \$5 breakfast sponsored by the Essex Knights of Columbus will be served Saturday and Sunday morning from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. in the convention centre tent located behind the old Holy Name School.

Games and competitions among firefighters are scheduled for 2 p.m. Saturday and 1 p.m. Sunday at the arena parking lot.

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