

AMERICA IN BLOOM

Castle Rock flower baskets stand out in national competition



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Castle Rock might just have the nicest flower baskets in the nation.

That's the word from the judges of the America In Bloom contest, who in July visited the town to evaluate the city's performance in the nationwide community-beautification competition.

Castle Rock didn't take the big prize — that distinction went to the town of Fayetteville, Ark., according to a press release.

But Castle Rock did remarkably well for a town participating for the first time, said local organizer, Nancy Chennault, who learned about the city's results on Friday.

In addition to receiving recognition for the best hanging flower baskets in the nation, Castle Rock also received honorable mention for floral displays in front of downtown businesses, the landscaping efforts at City Hall and a website developed as part of the project.

In all, 27 cities competed this year. Of the five cities in the population under 3,000 category, Castle Rock placed second in the overall score.

Chennault said that she was "thrilled — very, very excited for the town."

Castle Rock "really has always had a volunteer force that comes out when needed, and they definitely showed it this year," Chennault said.

The town won't receive any trophies or cash prizes, but a 24-page evaluation of town's efforts is reward enough, Chennault said.

"Having outside eyes looking" at the city will help volunteers and city officials keep beautification and civic involvement efforts on track, Chennault said.

Among other things, the report suggests eliminating exposed garbage receptacles, reducing the number of distracting signs and continuing to build a volunteer base.

"We're looking forward to following through on a lot of (the suggestions)," Chennault said.