

Sister city wins gold for flowers

In 2006, Holmes Beach became sister city to Mooskirchen, Austria through the efforts of Chuck Stealey and Michael Schwab.

By Pat Copeland
SUN STAFF WRITER
pcopeland@amisun.com

Mooskirchen, Austria, the sister city of Holmes Beach, has been awarded a gold medal in the annual European Floral Competition, Entente Florale Europe.

The competition was founded 25 years ago and is sponsored by the European Association for Flowers and Landscape. Its purpose is the improvement of the quality of life for urban and village communities.

City officials, private organizations and individuals are encouraged to beautify their towns and villages in order to improve the quality of life by planting flowers and shrubs, developing and maintaining green spaces and parks and fostering development which is ecologically and environmentally sensitive.

It is open to all countries in the EU and there are two categories - villages, with a population up to 10,000, and towns, with a population of 10,001 or more. Mooskirchen with 2,100 people is in the village category.

They are judged on vegetation and landscape, environment and free time and tourism. This year, Mooskirchen received one of nine gold medals. In addition, 13 silver and two bronze medals were awarded.

Mooskirchen also was named the Most Beautiful Flower Village of Styria in 2000 and 2005. The village is in the province of Styria.

Holmes Beach became sister city to Mooskirchen through the efforts of Chuck Stealey and Michael Schwab, who met more than 20 years ago as ham radio operators. The pair thought of the sister city idea five years ago over cocktails at the Sandbar.

In 2006, both mayors signed proclamations and gifts were exchanged, making the union official.



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY MICHAEL SCHWAB

Clockwise from top left, flowers bloom in front of a chapel in Fluttendorf, a suburb of Mooskirchen; flowers adorn a home in the residential area; flowers beautify the town bridge railing; flowers line the streets of the town square in the summer; and the town square with a church dating to the 11th century is lush with trees and flowers.



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