



Six Illinois Communities Competing for “Prettiest Painted Places” Honors

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Thanks to a national competition to find the “Prettiest Painted Places in America,” people across the country are discovering what Illinois residents have long known: The Prairie State has some of the most beautiful towns and neighborhoods to be found anywhere.

Sponsored by the Paint Quality Institute, whose mission is to educate the public about quality paints and coatings, the “Prettiest Painted Places” competition has drawn six entries from Illinois. The nominees are Alton, Aurora, Elsah, Galena, Geneva, and Woodstock. The RiverBend Growth Association submitted Alton and Elsah with a series of photographs.

Over the next few weeks, the six Illinois communities will vie with nearly 200 nominees from other states for regional and national honors, as judges with expertise in color selection, exterior painting, and home improvement review the entries, conduct additional research and make selected site visits. Finalists will be announced in late September, and the nation’s 12 “Prettiest Painted Places” will be revealed in mid-October.

The Paint Quality Institute has conducted its competition twice before, most recently in 2000. Its purpose is to vividly show how an attractive paint color scheme can greatly enhance the “curb appeal” of any structure’s exterior.

“We feel there is no better way to demonstrate the importance of exterior paint color than to focus on these beautiful real-world communities that take so much pride in their appearance,” said Debbie Zimmer, paint and color expert at the Paint Quality Institute.

“The places involved in our competition are a tremendous inspiration to us all, and by giving them recognition, we hope to instill in the public a better appreciation for the role exterior paint can play in protecting and enhancing the appearance of any home or building,” she said.

A wide variety of “places” have been entered in the competition -- big city neighborhoods, tiny rural towns, historical districts, “Main Streets” and communities with exterior mural programs. Nominees range from well-known places, such as Cape Cod, Massachusetts and Napa, California to hidden gems like Vashon-Maury Island, Washington and Bell Buckle, Tennessee.

In case you’re curious, the names and locations of all of the nominees are posted on the Paint Quality Institute website at ***blog.paintquality.com***.

THUMBNAIL SKETCHES OF ILLINOIS NOMINEES

- Alton: The site of the final Lincoln-Douglas debate, the town has three historic districts with a variety of beautifully painted architectural styles.
- Aurora: The second largest city in the state is encircled with historic districts and historic landmarks that are vibrant in both personality and paint.
- Village of Elsah: A tiny town rich in history and architecture, it provides a realistic and pretty picture of 19th century life along the Mississippi River.
- Galena: With 85% of its buildings situated in a national historic district, the town features six distinct styles of architecture thoughtfully painted in a historically accurate color palette.
- Geneva: Tucked away in the Fox River Valley, the town is a picture postcard of Victorian homes on tree-lined streets.
- Woodstock: The town is a prots-typical Midwestern city loaded with atypical Victorian charm from its historic square to its charming side-streets.