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Art in Bloom wins state Festival of the Year honor

MEDFORD, OREGON — Medford's annual Art in Bloom has been named the 2006 Festival of the Year (also winning in 2004) for festivals under \$150,000 by the Oregon Festivals and Events Association. The local downtown festival of art, music and wine, held during Mother's Day weekend, won the distinction among 160 festivals throughout the state.

This May 12 and 13, Art in Bloom will be celebrating its seventh year. The event is its own non-profit organization that is supported by several local businesses throughout Medford and the Rogue Valley.

"This is a great honor for Art in Bloom, and it will help open a lot of doors for us to enhance this special event even more," said Cindy Bedingfield, festival coordinator for the past six years. "We've been careful to get quality artisans, performers and booths over the years, and that has helped distinguish us. When we started we had to search out artists to be at the event, and now that we've grown and people know more about the festival, artists call us. It's really helped boost the quality of this annual celebration."

Other festival attributes Bedingfield credits for winning the award include the popular Children's Tent with kids' activities, a good physical layout for people to enjoy each of the booths, a strong partnership with the Mail Tribune and Radio Medford for publicizing the event, and more wineries taking part. This year will feature the Oregon Farm and Wine Tour.

Attendance has grown from around 2500 six years ago to nearly 10,000 in 2006, including 700 kids enjoying free Mother's Day activities in the Children's Tent.

"Every year we've gotten better and better displays and events," Bedingfield said. "And our educational outreach has grown."

For more information, please contact Anne Jenkins, Senior Vice President, Medford Visitors & Convention Bureau, at 541-608-8516, or anne@visitmedford.org.

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