

- **2005 – 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of City Beautification.**
- Musical performance & tribute entitled, “Flags, Flowers, and Holiday Fanfare,” observed September 14, 2005, in Performing Arts Center at Frankenmuth High School saluting 50 years of Frankenmuth Beautification.
- Public commemoration of 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary is scheduled for late fall 2005 at Frankenmuth’s Fischer Hall.

CITY



BEAUTIFICATION  
COMMITTEE

**General  
Comments**

Frankenmuth citizens set the trend for beauty with well kept lawns and flower beds. Weed-free curbs & walks and removal of grass clippings give the community a manicured look.

- Idea to acquire a watering truck originated when Charlevoix annually entered their beautifully painted, musical watering truck in Frankenmuth’s Bavarian Festival Parade. Wil Swartz hand painted Frankenmuth’s truck with beautiful decorative trim . . . the truck is still not musical . . .
- Heinz & Christine Pfeffer are green thumbs behind flower basket program.
- Frankenmuth News has publicized Beautification throughout each of the 50 years. Special thanks to Steve Grainger, Scott Wenzel, & Gretchen Rau.
- Over 25 beautification awards have been given to Frankenmuth by Keep Michigan Beautiful, including three phases of the DDA Streetscapes.
- Over the years non-committee members who have been of major help were recognized during Christmas gatherings of the committee: Munchy & Sandy Muehlfeld (1992) - master talents as a City trims installer for 25 years & again in 1997 for 30 years; Walter and Maria Palmer (1995) - funding star streamers, including installation and removal; Matt & Eileen Kern (1997) - many contributions of cheese and sausage trays for committee meetings; model donors Dorothy & Tiny Zehnder (1994); Karen Hoffman (2000) - for clerical & graphic talents.
- Zehnder’s & McDonald’s restaurants are generous providers of cookies and beverages for annual Christmas Lighting Ceremony.
- City Manager Charlie Graham, Treasurer John Deterding, DPW Director Randy Braeutigam, & Horticulturist Ginny Foster are to be saluted for their involvement in Beautification.
- For several years Judy Dohrmann, from the City’s CPA firm, handled Beautification Committee finances.
- Vendors of surrounding communities that serve Frankenmuth have been generous in making financial contributions.
- Greater Frankenmuth Area Community Foundation has made gifts of silhouette palm trees for river bank Bethlehem scene, metal stars for park, 119 velvet bows & 50 “Willkommen to Frankenmuth” pole banners.
- Budget for fiscal year 2005-06 is \$125,000. Five years ago budget was \$86,000; ten years ago, \$66,000; and fifty years ago . . . \$800.
- Number of contributions from donors increased from 37 in 1985, 77 in 1990, 113 in 1995, & 167 in 2000; to 550 for the latest fiscal year. Donor Honor Roll annually appears in a September issue of the Frankenmuth News. The committee interprets each donation as a vote of approval for continued beauty.
- Committee members Verna VanDevelde & Bill Varney have assumed major responsibilities for fundraising. Verna deserves a special salute for her computer skills that record and report contributions. She almost works fulltime for free.

**50 and more  
Highlights – 50<sup>th</sup> Year 2005**

500 and even 5000 facts could be documented to reflect the first 50 years . . . for history’s sake, an attempt was made to report the highlights since 1955.

**Start-up Years  
1955-1956**

- Village Superintendent Herb Keinath and his wife Edna had visions and ambitions of making Frankenmuth a “Beautiful Town” in addition to being a “Friendly Town.”
- Village President Otto Trinklein, Former Village President Carl Satow, and Councilman Hick Leslie favored the idea and consulted with Frankenmuth Women’s Club, electrical contractor Oscar Rau, and decorator Wally Bronner.
- The Council proposed a millage to raise \$800 for beautification fund. The decimal point was wrongly placed and only \$8 was raised. (1955 ballot was corrected and millage was approved.)
- Council appointed Ed Daenzer, Ellen Felgner, Lena Stromer, Edna Keinath, Liz Zeilinger, Police Chief Henry Zinck, Rev. August Kehrberg, Oscar Rau, Doris Voorheis, Pauline Bronner, Carl Rupprecht, Howard Mueller, and Wally Bronner to the volunteer Frankenmuth Beautification Committee. Ellen Felgner, Liz Zeilinger, Doris Voorheis, Pauline Bronner are all living . . . and Wally Bronner is still an active committee member.
- The first decorations, street streamers of natural green festooning with colored lights, were installed by Oscar Rau & team. Frankenmuth Women’s Club funded decorations for the entrance signs.
- Inspired by the beautiful petunia beds in Vassar and Millington, members of the Frankenmuth Women’s Club planted many curbside beds in Frankenmuth. Edna Keinath and Lil Keinath planted thousands of petunias.

**Frankenmuth’s  
125<sup>th</sup> Year  
1957-1970**

- Illuminated Stars of Bethlehem and bells were added to street streamers in 1957.
- Decorations were added to intersections.
- 1963 – life-like garland & wreaths replaced natural greens.
- Arbor Day tree planting tradition began. Local nurseries often donate trees; also committee members contribute \$1.00 per meeting toward purchase of trees.
- Encouraged by Rev. Kehrberg, a life-size Nativity scene was installed in the downtown park for the 1964 Christmas season, and Women’s Club members installed lights on the trees.
- Street streamers were transformed into pole decorations in 1965.
- 1968 – Wise men and camels added to the Nativity scene in downtown park.
- Baskets of look-a-like blossoms were added to lampposts and flower rings suspended across the street.
- **1970 – “Frankenmuth 125<sup>th</sup> Year”** decorative accent was added to the Beautification program.

Much more could be reported . . . but, as Mason said to Dixon . . .  
“The line has to be drawn someplace.”

**Frankenmuth's  
150<sup>th</sup> Year  
1971-1995**

- Christmas Lighting ceremony introduced by Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with Beautification Committee.
- **1976 – Red, white, & blue bicentennial decorations** were installed for all-year effect.
- Popular trend in some cities – painting fire hydrants to resemble soldiers & firemen. City Manager Wil Keinath thought the idea clever, but said a fire hydrant should retain the look of a red hydrant.
- Don Fischer developed a map detailing pole locations & styles of trims.
- Christmas lights added to Willkommen Park in 1983.
- 1984 – U.S.A. flag program introduced with funds from Chamber of Commerce.
- Triangle Park, Weiss at Jefferson, was first decorated in 1985 with donations from area property owners.
- Munchy Muehlfeld coded pole locations in 1987 and added number plates.
- Flag program extended to include West Genesee St. and East Jefferson in tribute to Michigan's 150<sup>th</sup> year.
- Don Keller proposed concept of spectacular lighting display on south riverbank. Majority of first 5 years financing came from Zehnder's, Bavarian Inn, & Bronner's CHRISTmas Wonderland. Vic & Bonnie Engel and Ron Groh contributed toward first-year cost of electrical connections. Trim consisted of a giant silhouette Nativity, illuminated trees, giant Star of Bethlehem, & 6-ft. "Peace on Earth" letters.
- 1988 – City Council began tradition of having Beautification Committee give annual report at council meeting.
- Howard Wendt volunteered to visit businesses inviting them to contribute funds for the beautification program and asked Wally Bronner to help make visits.
- 1989 – longtime Committee Chairman Hick Leslie retired from Chairmanship duties. Doug Stoner became Chairman, Howard Wendt was Vice Chairman.
- Doug Stoner was impressed by beautiful natural floral displays he noticed while visiting Canada and encouraged the committee to add more natural flowers.
- 95 baskets of live flowers added to Main Street poles spring 1990. Jeep with driver watered the baskets.
- Block Captains appointed to monitor main thoroughfares for weeds on curbs and sidewalks and to encourage grass clippings kept off streets and sidewalks.
- Sister City Gunzenhausen flags were added.
- Daeschlein Tree Farm contributed numerous trees during the 1990's for river bank.
- Nine choir singers added to Willkommen park display.
- In 1992 Walter and Maria Palmer began gifting Star Street Streamers, currently totaling 24. They annually donate cost of installation and removal.
- Keep Michigan Beautiful sub-committee appointed to annually nominate candidates in Frankenmuth for statewide KMB awards.
- Flower watering truck purchased in 1993.
- 1994 – committees formed for 150<sup>th</sup> observance. Banners, street streamers, & entrance displays would commemorate Frankenmuth's 150<sup>th</sup> year.
- Tiny & Dorothy Zehnder's 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary gifts made possible 16 flower boxes for Main Street Bridge.
- Jeanne Braeutigam appointed Historian to organize past records and maintain albums of annual activity of the committee. The books are preserved in Wickson-Link Memorial Library.
- Five 150<sup>th</sup> street streamers, 60 double-sided Frankenmuth Crest banners in 3 styles, and ground signs commemorated **Frankenmuth's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 1995.**

**Y2K  
1996-2000**

- 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary trims recycled and resold for profit to other communities observing 150<sup>th</sup> anniversaries: Chesaning & Fremont (1996), Frankentrost (1997), Frankenlust (1998), Vassar (1999), Richville (2000), and Sebewaing & Amelith (2002).
- 250 flats of petunias planted on Main Street, E. & W. Genesee, and E. Jefferson.
- List Street Christmas decorations storage building built during 1996.
- 184 live flower baskets for 1997.
- 15 zigzag trees for new poles on Weiss Street donated by Bronner's CHRISTmas Wonderland.
- Palmers donated 8 zigzag trees for City Entrances.
- 1998 – South entrance display featured "J-O-Y" letters.
- Newly formed Downtown Development Authority (DDA) became a great help providing beauty and cooperation for Frankenmuth's "look of a park."
- In 1999 plans were developed for Year 2000 decorations.
- Floral program expanded to 255 hanging baskets & 332 flats of flowers.
- When City hired fulltime horticulturist Ginny Foster, floral displays reached new levels of variety, quantity and beauty.
- Illuminated 8-ft. tall decorative **2000** numerals recognized "Y2K" all year.
- Mrs. Fred (Leona) Geyer remembered beautification fund in her will.
- General mailing for fundraising mailed to larger circulation list.

**50<sup>th</sup> Year  
City Beautification  
2001 - 2005**

- Frankenmuth Rotary Club invited Beautification Committee to present history for noon program.
- The DDA upgraded fittings for pole & streamer decorations to complement streetscape/lighting.
- Mission statement adopted in 2002:  
"The City Beautification Committee, a volunteer organization of the City of Frankenmuth, guides aesthetic enhancements within the City of Frankenmuth. Using the community's human, natural, and financial resources, the CBC nurtures a picturesque environment, rewarding the community, its residents, and its visitors through positive year-round efforts."
- City appropriated extra funds to expand U.S.A. flag program.
- Gary Hecht & team began installing the Christmas decorations in 2002.
- 2003 – two trees planted in front of Chamber of Commerce in memory of Herb & Edna Keinath.
- Beauty Bucks program started. Community leaders and committee members were servers and earned \$2,000 in tips for the beautification fund.
- Fundraiser: Car-shaped blinky light pins sold at AutoFest 2004.
- Committee member Dr. Mark Limberg promoted idea of Christmas displays at east, west, southwest, & south entrances to City.
- A bonus, CPA W. Don Zehnder is CBC Treasurer, Dick Galsterer is General Chair.
- Extensive electrical upgrading to accommodate Christmas decorations on river bank and other city-owned plots.
- List Street Christmas decoration storage building balcony expanded.
- 2005 – Committee plans to start a financial program to reserve funds for future beautification projects designated by the committee.
- The Department of Public Works engraved numerals on each of the new lampposts, facilitating communication.
- Consultant Munchy retired from most CBC duties.