Written by Celestino Ruffini
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Galena is chosen as one of the finalists from 193 entries

GALENA, Ill. – The search for the “Prettiest Painted Places in America” is narrowing, with 10 finalists from the North Central U.S., including Galena, Illinois, named by the Paint Quality Institute, an informational entity whose mission is to educate the public about quality paints and coatings. The city was submitted by the Galena/Jo Daviess County Convention & Visitors Bureau, in joint effort with the city of Galena.

The 10 finalists are: Aurora, Ill.; Bay View Association, Mich.; Evansville, Wis.; Fargo-Moorhead, N.D./Minn.; Galena, Ill.; Grinnell, Iowa; Lowry Hill East, Minn.; Richmond, Ind.; Saugatuck-Douglas, Mich.; and Stillwater, Minn.

After further evaluation, two of the 10 will be named the prettiest painted places in the North Central U.S., alongside winners from five other regions, to make up the 12 prettiest painted places in America.

A “prettiest painted place” is a special town or neighborhood with exceptional community-wide “curb appeal” due to optically pleasing or creative use of exterior paint color, according to Debbie Zimmer, paint and color expert for the Paint Quality Institute.

“One typically thinks of curb appeal defined by beautiful color schemes on homes or buildings, and that’s the case most of the time, but exquisite outdoor murals and creative use of paint color on statues, signage, traffic signals, water towers, and even streets and sidewalks have elevated the appearance of many of today’s prettiest communities,” she said.

“The recognition as a finalist in this prestigious competition is yet another feather in the cap for Galena’s residents. Their dedication towards maintaining the highest standards of community preservation, in particular to paint schemes, continues to pace Galena as a leader in aesthetics, design and integrity,” stated Celestino Ruffini, director of sales and marketing for the Galena/Jo Daviess County Convention & Visitors Bureau. “The city of Galena staff deserves the accolades as they continue to educate residents and business owners about the importance of maintaining their buildings, especially the exteriors,” he said.

The search for America’s prettiest painted places began this spring, when the Paint Quality Institute contacted state departments of tourism, local chambers of commerce, and convention and visitors bureaus in all 50 states. Eventually, nearly 200 towns, historic districts, neighborhoods and Main Streets were nominated in the competition.

Last week, a panel of judges with expertise in color selection, exterior painting, and home improvement reviewed the entries and narrowed the field to 60 finalists, 10 from each of six geographic regions. The 12 national winners will be named later this month.

This is the third time the Paint Quality Institute has conducted a search for the prettiest painted places in America. It held the first competition in the 1990s and another in year 2000.

According to Zimmer, the purpose of the competition is to give recognition to places that use paint to express pride in their communities, and highlight how an attractive exterior paint treatment can enhance the curb appeal of virtually any home, building or exterior structure.

To see a complete list of the 60 finalists involved in the search for the “Prettiest Painted Places in America”, visit http://blog.paintquality.com/ppp/ .