



EAST PALESTINE'S DECORATING CONTEST: USA 250TH ANNIVERSARY

This year, 2026, is the United States of America's 250th Anniversary of independence from Britain. This community decorating contest is held as a vibrant community activity that will be a great asset to resident's property, getting East Palestine cleaned up for spring, and overall increase our village's attractiveness to residents and visitors alike. This not only brings to light the vision of our community pride, but also the beautification of our village while engaging all residents. *Alongside this community engaged contest, the Village of East Palestine has submitted local murals to Murals Across Ohio for the nation's celebration.*

The contest timeline is projected to run *Wednesday, April 15th through Friday, June 26th*. Judging will proceed at the Municipal Office and awarded winners will be assessed based on consistency of creativity, theme/category alignment, curb appeal, and thoughtfulness put into concept. *Judging duration will be 8am-4pm Monday, June 29th through Friday, July 3rd*. This contest is open to residents and businesses inside the 44413 zip-code and registration via the provided Google Form is required. Restrictions for contest are included at the end of this document.

Categories:

1. Best Street
 - a. Most homes/businesses participating/best average of participants
 2. Best use of Lights
 - a. LED displays
 - b. Creative lighting
 - c. Spotlighting
 - d. Glow in the dark/solar accents
 3. Most Original
 - a. Artistic illustrations
 - b. Cultural/Heritage designs
 - c. Unexpected color palettes
 - i. Silver/gold/etc.
 - d. Whimsical or humorous designs
 - i. (Not political)
 4. Best use of Landscaping
 - a. Patriotic flowers
 - b. Garden art
 - c. Painted stones/planters
 - d. Yard arrangements
 5. Best Business
 - a. Best decorated business within limits of contest
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Awards and Prizes:

- VISA e-gift card (no pick-up required, can be sent via email)
- All category winners announced at City Park Independence Day Celebration
- Local news coverage (WKBN, WFMJ, Morning Journal) and Village Facebook/Instagram/LinkedIn/Website/Newsletter publications highlighting contest winners
- Bragging rights

Awards: \$200 (\$50 each) for categories Best Use of Lights, Most Original, Best Use of Landscaping, Best Business. Best street will not be awarded with an e-gift card to reduce cost.

Eligibility:

All eligible winners and entries are required to complete a Google Form. Information required in the Google Form:

- First and last name
- Valid email
 - Will be needed for communication and award potential prizes
- Home address
- Phone number
- Upload an image of decorated home/business
 - This assists in judging and locating residence/business if needed for more photography
- Brief description of design choice and what category was in mind with decor

The Google Form will track all entries, ensure communication methods if needed, and imagery of decorated properties to assist in determined winnings.

Alignment with Village of East Palestine Goals:

This contest is curated to support Village beautification, strengthen community pride, and encourage meaningful resident engagement throughout this milestone year. By celebrating creativity across East Palestine and Unity Township, the contest highlights the value of regional cooperation: reinforcing the same spirit of partnership at the heart of the proposed JEDD. Including Unity Township not only broadens participation and visibility but also demonstrates how both communities can work together to create positive momentum, enhance the appearance of our neighborhoods, accent our shared identity, and showcase the resilience and unity of our area.

Restrictions:

- Exterior-Only Displays. All decorations must be visible from the street or sidewalk. No entry onto private property is required for judging.
- Family-Friendly Content: No political messaging, campaign signs, or issue-based advocacy. No profanity, offensive imagery or inappropriate themes. Decorations must be suitable for all ages.
- Noise and Light Consideration: No excessively loud sound elements. Lighting displays must not create safety hazards or disturb neighbors and traffic.
- Safety and Compliance: Decorations must not block sidewalks, roadways, hydrants or utility access. No use of open flames or hazardous materials. Displays must comply with existing village ordinances.
- Timeframe requirements: Judging will occur only during designated days and hours. Decorations are encouraged to remain displayed throughout the year if property owner wishes, or decorations may be removed after announcement of winners.

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- Respect for neighbors: No displays that target, mock, or reference specific individuals/groups/properties. Participants must ensure their display does not encroach on neighboring properties.
 - Property owner permission: Any renters wishing to participate must have landlord approval. Multi-unit properties must cooperate with property management.
 - Photo and Publicity Consent: By entering East Palestine's Decorating Contest: USA's 250th Anniversary, participants agree that photos of their display may be used on village social media, website, promotional materials, and local news.
 - Unity Township Participation: All restrictions apply equally to East Palestine and Unity Township participants. Displays must remain within the boundaries of the designated participation area.



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