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A green thumb for a growing district

By **Boyd Fletcher**
The Aurora Sentinel

AURORA | A rose by any other name would probably still want to be in Gayle Jetchick's garden.

Jetchick is known around the city for her green thumb in a garden, and fittingly the Northern Aurora Business Association is honoring her for helping to grow the city and her efforts in blossoming a renewed area of Aurora.

The Northern Aurora Business Association and Waste Management of Denver have given the Circle of Life Award for the last 18 years to people recognized as leaders in the Aurora community. The award is a surprise to the recipient, who is usually brought to the event under different pretenses.

Married to her high school sweetheart from Detroit, Jetchick moved to Aurora in 1973 with her husband, John, who was training at the former Fitzsimons Army Medical Center, buying a house near to Moorhead park. Eleven years later, the Jetchicks moved to their current house in Highland Park East, where Gayle has cultivated a rose garden with more than 160 rose bushes.

Gayle worked as a medical transcriptionist at Rose Medical Center in Denver, where she worked with the state health department's Children with Special Needs outreach program for nearly 30 years.

Outside of work and her roses, Jetchick found a passion for improving her neighborhood and the surrounding districts. Jetchick became active in her neighborhood association as well as the Neighborhood Organizations Along Havana (NOAH) group.

"She was so happy to find other people with a passion for improving the neighborhood where she lives," said Pam Wilson, president of the Northern Aurora Business Association.

Invited as a neighborhood guest to one of the initial business improvement districts, Jetchick took it upon herself to compile a mostly complete list of property owners along the bustling arterial. Jetchick, 56, soon found herself leading the charge to get the necessary 700 signatures from business and property owners along a 4.3-mile stretch of Havana. Her role expanded even further after the approval of the Havana Business Improvement District in November 2007, when the BID's steering committee named her executive director.

Arnie Schultz, president of NOAH and active member of the Aurora community, said Jetchick deserves the award due to her tireless efforts with the BID. "Gayle makes me look like a snail," the ever-busy Schultz said. "The BID would not have happened without her. Absolutely would not have happened."

Schultz also credited Jetchick's affability to the success of the BID.

"She is friendly to everybody," he said. "Everybody knows her, and everybody likes her."

After being named Woman of the Year by the Aurora Chamber of Commerce earlier this year, Jetchick talked about her role with the BID.

"I live here, and it is important to me," said Jetchick of her initial work helping to clean up the stretch of road. "Aurora is a nice area with nice people, but it has (a negative) perception. We need to change the perception that this is a dangerous and dirty place."

Jetchick was also nominated by Aurora City Councilman Larry Beer to be a member of the Citizens Advisory Budget Committee.

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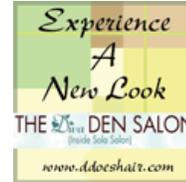
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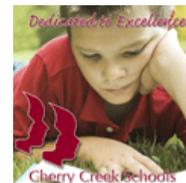
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Beer said her tireless commitment to the BID and to the city in general made her an easy

selection.

"She is just a wonderful person," said Beer.

And Jetchick's passion for petals found its way into one of the city's largest redevelopment projects, as developers of the Havana Gardens took her suggestion for a rose garden and made it a centerpiece of the shopping center's design.

So, Wilson said, it was only fitting that a tree that blossoms blue and red was fitting.

The Autumn Brilliance Serviceberry is an all-season plant that can either grow as a single-trunk tree or as a shrub. It is known for its bright fall colors and edible berries similar to blueberries.



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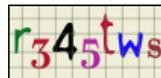
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