Bantam assoc. accepting award applications

County nonprofit groups can apply

Eagle Staff Reports

For the second year the Friends of Bantam Jeep Association intends to pump tens of thousands of dollars into nonprofit organizations in Butler County.

The association said Tuesday that it would use the same process it used last year to select the nonprofit groups to get upward of $30,000 this year.

Nonprofit groups have until 5 p.m. Oct. 13 to apply for part of the money. Organizations must submit a 500-word letter that explains how their work benefits the community and how they would use any money they receive. Groups must also provide proof of their nonprofit status as part of the application.

After the gifts are awarded in late October, groups who receive money will be expected to provide updates on the progress of their projects.

As was the case last year, the association said that it expects to award financial gifts based on how many groups request support, and how much need they demonstrate.

The awards are funded through proceeds from the annual Bantam Jeep Heritage Festival.

In 2016, the association donated $20,000 to 19 nonprofits. Those awards ranged from $500 to $3,000, the association said at the time. And Todd Wagner, the group’s president, said members have been energized by watching organizations use the gifts to better communities throughout the county.

“The members of our Association want to give back to our community and support other organizations who are working hard to make a difference in Butler County,” Wagner said.

“When we see all of the great things that last year’s gift recipients were able to accomplish with our support, it is very rewarding for our entire organization.”

One of the keynote projects the association’s awards helped fund last year was the Walldogs mural project, which was organized by Butler County Historical Society. The group brought in artists from across the world to paint 10 murals depicting Butler’s past. The association’s gift to the society was used to help install some of the murals on walls around the city, including a mural of a Bantam Jeep on the wall of 123 W. New Castle St.

Last year’s Bantam Jeep Heritage Festival — the first under the association’s leadership — had an economic impact of about $1.7 million in Butler County. Wagner said this year’s festival was even bigger, noting that it saw a 12 percent increase in registered Jeeps. In total the festival drew more than 2,000 Jeeps to Butler County, the group said in a news release.

This year’s financial awards come in addition to more than $23,000 the group has already provided to dozens of organizations that helped run the 2017 festival.

Groups can find applications online at www.bantamjeepfestival.com/financial-gift-application