



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

City Council Issues 'Plant a Tree Month' Proclamation and Urges Residents to Join City-Wide Effort

Hazelwood, Mo., (Feb. 25, 2010) – Realizing the importance of trees to protecting Earth's atmosphere, the Hazelwood City Council has declared March as "Plant A Tree Month" with the issuance of a proclamation at a recent Council meeting. Local residents are urged to show support for the environment by planting a tree or participating in Hazelwood's Commemorative Tree Fund during the spring growing season.

"There's a growing concern about the effects of global warming on our planet's environment," said Mayor Matthew G. Robinson of Hazelwood. "This climate change phenomenon is caused by increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases resulting from human activity such as fossil fuel burning and the disappearance of trees needed to absorb the carbon dioxide in our air. The more we destroy the trees around us, the hotter the earth gets."

Benefit to Environment

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, one acre of trees absorbs six tons of carbon dioxide and puts out four tons of oxygen. This is enough to meet the annual breathing needs of 18 people. Unfortunately we're losing more trees than we're planting as replacements.

Facts provided by the Steering Committee of the NCNC Earth Stewards indicate that nearly 10 million acres of forests have been converted to new subdivisions over the past 20 years. On a worldwide scale, over 40 million acres of forests disappear each year. In the Amazon rainforests, trees are being cut down at the rate of 100 acres per minute. This is alarming since 25 percent of the pharmaceutical products we use contain essential ingredients found only in the rainforests. Plus, 70 percent of the plants identified as useful in cancer treatment are found in the rainforests.

"As mayor of the City of Hazelwood, I'm proud to say that our residents 'get it' when it comes to understanding the importance of recycling. In December 2009, Veolia collected 120.83 tons of recyclable items in Hazelwood, an increase of 32.45 tons from the year before. A month later, we produced 111.76 tons. We attribute these strong numbers to our efforts to educate residents about what paper products can be recycled or re-used to help reduce the number of trees that need to be cut down," added Robinson.

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City Council Issues ‘Plant a Tree Month’ Proclamation, Add One

In addition, the value of trees can be seen in other ways such as:

- Preventing soil erosion and slowing down storm water runoff
- Improving the water supply by blocking sediment and chemicals from entering streams
- Providing a natural habitat for birds and other animals
- Bearing fruits and vegetables for food.

Benefit to Community

Hazelwood residents are encouraged to get involved in a city-wide project to improve and beautify their community as well. According to The Arbor Day Foundation, “Trees can be a stimulus to economic development, attracting new businesses and tourism. Commercial retail areas are more attractive to shoppers, apartments rent more quickly, tenants stay longer, and space in a wooded setting is more valuable to sell or rent.”

As for the impact on home values, one study done with realtors revealed that 83 percent of them believed mature trees have a “strong or moderate impact” on the salability of homes listed for under \$150,000; on homes over \$250,000, the percentage increased to 98. It is estimated that healthy, mature trees add an average of 10 percent to a property’s value.

Benefit to Pocketbook

According to Dr. E. Greg McPherson, Center for Urban Forest Research, “If you plant a tree today on the west side of your home, in 5 years your energy bills should be 3 percent less. In 15 years, the savings will be nearly 12 percent.” The USDA Forest Service states that trees properly placed around buildings can reduce air conditioning needs by 30 percent and can save 20-50 percent in energy used for heating. For helpful tips on selecting the right tree and planting it in the right place, visit AmerenUE’s website at www.ameren.com and read the brochure titled, “Planting Trees.”

Commemorative Tree Fund

Currently, there are 62 commemorative trees in 16 parks located throughout the City of Hazelwood. This program, established by the Hazelwood Parks and Recreation Division, allows residents to make a tax deductible donation toward the purchase of a tree in memory of a loved one or to commemorate a special occasion. An engraved plaque will be made for them featuring a special message related to the birth of a child, special birthday, wedding anniversary or a memorial to a loved one.

All donations will be recognized by having the engraved plaques mounted on a donors’ list permanently displayed at White Birch Park. Additionally, the donors will receive a Commemorative Tree Certificate and a map of the park showing the tree’s location. The donated trees will be planted and cared for by the Hazelwood Parks and Recreation Division.

A donation of the actual cost of a selected tree is suggested. If you choose to contribute the market cost of the tree (1 ½” to 2” caliber) plus \$15, you may select the type of tree and the park you want it planted in. The Hazelwood Parks and Recreation will make every effort to plant the tree of your choice. However, in order to keep proper ecological balance, the Division reserves the right to determine the appropriate planting site. Donations received for less than the actual cost to the City for a tree will be accumulated over time for a tree purchase.

For more information on Hazelwood’s Commemorative Tree Fund, contact the Parks and Recreation Office at (314) 731-0980.