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News Release

For Immediate Release

Urban Forester Assists Art Museum with Historic Trees

Art Museum Director Nick Nelson and Public Works Urban Forester Casey Kellner are working together on a plan to properly care for and enhance the beauty of the large and historic trees gracing the grounds of the Museum. The facility, which is home to some 8,895 art objects, sits at the edge of Phelps Grove Park – a fixture in the storied neighborhood since 1958.

About 62 trees make up the property's "urban forest," but unfortunately 11 of those are considered diseased, in serious decline, dead or in danger of falling, causing a potential safety hazard. Four other trees are growing as underbrush and are in direct conflict with other planted trees.

Kellner is a certified arborist and a member of the City's Public Works department. She says the City's commitment to hiring U.S. certified arborists and empowering the department with the tools to best care for over 15,000 public trees, 25 acres of landscaped street medians and parkways, and vegetation on 65 acres of city facilities and other properties throughout the city, illustrates the organization's philosophy that trees are an important part of the City's infrastructure.

"Our primary goal is to effectively manage these areas of responsibility to provide a safe environment and a higher quality of life for our residents and visitors," says Kellner, who also spearheads the City's Tree Registry and NeighborWoods Programs.

The City has a commitment to protecting the City's tree canopy. "We base it on the canopy lost, then replace a removed tree with a tree that will eventually provide twice the original canopy," Kellner explained.

Nelson says Kellner has been extremely helpful in helping him plan for the future.

"When we had the waterways cleaned at the museum in August, we had some of the trees on the property evaluated as there were some concerns about their health," Nelson explains. In September, he presented a list detailing the state of the trees on the grounds. Kellner evaluated the trees and provided a list of those recommended for removal, which Nelson took to the Art Museum Board in December. He followed that by meeting with members of the Phelps Grove Neighborhood Association.

Kellner will do a walking tour with anyone interested in learning more about the state of the trees and why 15 are needed to be removed, this morning. The walk is open to the public and will start in the Museum's parking lot at 8 a.m.

For more information, contact: Cora Scott, Director of Public Information & Civic Engagement, 417-864-1009 (office) | 417-380-3352 (cell), cscott@springfieldmo.gov

About Springfield's Tree Registry

The Springfield Tree Registry was established by the Tree City USA Advisory Committee to heighten the level of awareness and appreciation of Springfield's urban forest. The perfect gift for the person who has everything would be to have a special tree recognized through the Springfield Tree Registry. To register your tree, fill out the Springfield Tree Registry application form and mail it with the \$35 registration fee to the address indicated on the form. The proceeds from all fees will be placed in the Tree City USA Fund, a fund with the Community Foundation of the Ozarks that supports the stewardship and cultivation of Springfield's public urban forest. Your gift is tax-deductible.