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News Release

For Immediate Release

Tree City USA Celebrates Arbor Day

Springfield’s Tree City USA Citizens Advisory Committee will celebrate Missouri Arbor Day with a series of activities and a ceremonial tree planting beginning at 5 p.m. Friday, April 2, 2010, on the Mediacom Ice Park East Plaza.

Friday’s event will include award presentations, kids’ activities, recognition of poster-contest winners, release of an award-winning publication, and the roll out of a new effort highlighting the value of trees in our community.

To celebrate Missouri Arbor Day, the Jarrett Middle School 8th Grade choir, under the direction of Linda Christenson, will sing “Trees for America”, an original selection written for Arbor Day.

The City of Springfield will receive its 25th consecutive Tree City, USA designation and City Utilities of Springfield will receive its 16th consecutive Tree Line, USA designation during the event. Tim Stanton, Missouri Department of Conservation Regional Forestry Supervisor, will present the awards.

The 12 finalist entries for the annual Arbor Day Poster Contest will be on display for the event. A tree will be planted at the appropriate time at each of the finalists’ schools to commemorate the accomplishment.

Abbe Ehlers, former Chair of the Tree City USA Committee, will be recognized for her long-time service and her recent recognition as a Top Ten Volunteer of the Year by the Alliance for Community Trees.

The Tree City USA Committee also will also roll out its new “Tree Tag Project” to raise awareness of the value of various sizes and species of trees represented by tags with dollar values placed on trees throughout the community.

“Trees offer us more than simple intrinsic value. Their worth can be measured in dollars as well, because they save us money in a host of other ways,” said Bridget Dierks, Chair of the Tree City USA Committee. “We hope this project can help homeowners realize that planting trees can financially benefit both the community and homeowners themselves.”

Funding for the Tree Tag Project is being provided by a Missouri Department of Conservation grant supporting urban forest preservation and education efforts.
As a part of an ongoing education effort to encourage proper tree planting near power lines, a City Utilities’ bus bearing “Right Tree, Right Place” graphics will be a part of the ceremony.

Activities related to trees and tree care will be available for children, as well as educational handouts, including the Committee’s newly released booklet “The Heart of a Tree” will be distributed. The publication recently earned the Author’s Award of Excellence from the Midwestern chapter of the International Society of Arborists.

At the close of the ceremony, the Tree City USA Committee and attendees of the celebration will plant a tree near the Greenway Trail in Jordan Valley Park.

“We appreciate the efforts of the Tree City USA citizens committee and look forward to joining them in the celebration of Arbor Day,” said Joe Payne, Springfield Public Works Operations Supervisor over Public Grounds.

For more information, contact: Joe Payne, Public Works Operations Supervisor over Public Grounds, 864-1954