Planting and protecting urban trees doesn't cost–it saves

Trees not only make cities cool, green and beautiful, they also perform a number of vital services that your city would otherwise have to go out and buy. Trees clean air, reducing carbon monoxide, ozone and other pollutants. They also reduce the need for stormwater systems that prevent oil and chemicals from washing into lakes and streams. Finally, they lower energy costs by shading buildings and cooling the air. Faced with the costs of engineering clean air, stormwater control and cooler buildings, cities like St. Peters, Clayton and Springfield, Mo., are discovering that planting and protecting trees is real bargain.

Think of trees as "green infrastructure"

Just as streets, sidewalks and sewers are parts of a community's crucial infrastructure, so are publicly owned trees. Trees–and, collectively, the community forest–are important assets that require care and maintenance, just the same as any other public works. How does your community care for its tree infrastructure? On a regular basis? As needed? Not at all? If you or your community would like assistance in the care and management of municipal trees, the Missouri Department of Conservation is here to help.

Steps to protecting your city's green infrastructure

- **Consult**—The Missouri Department of Conservation website can help you find your local forester.
- **Fund**—Missourians care about trees, and many communities show strong support for establishing a tree fund.
- **Budget**—Include a line item of $2 per capita for tree planting and maintenance in your annual budget.
- **Hire**—Staff trained and experienced in forestry, horticulture or related subject can protect your cities investment in green infrastructure.
- **Train**—Existing staff can improve their care of trees and community forests through proper training.
- **Promote**—Communicate the need for community tree care and let taxpayers know what you're doing to practice it.
- **Enjoy rewards**—Hold an Arbor Day or other event to celebrate your community's trees and your commitment to planting and protecting them.

Contact your local forester for more information

missouriconservation.org/forest

Serving nature and you

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Missouri Department of Conservation is available to all individuals without regard to their race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. Questions should be directed to the Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102, (573) 751-4115 (voice) or 800-735-2966 (TTY), or to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Federal Assistance, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Mail Stop: MBSP-4020, Arlington, VA 22203.

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Protect your green infrastructure

The Missouri Department of Conservation can help you protect the time, effort and money you put into your town's trees and community forestry programs. Our services include the following:

- **Technical assistance**—Forestry professionals are available to help you on-site with issues and questions.
- **Workshops and training** on tree selection, planting and care are available free of charge.
- **Cost-share assistance**—*Tree Resource Improvement and Maintenance* is a competitive cost-share program designed to help communities fund tree projects on *publicly owned property.*
- **Recognition**—*Missouri Arbor Award of Excellence* is an awards program that recognizes sustained and thoughtful care of your community's trees.
- **Networking**—Missouri Community Forestry Council offers an opportunity for you to met and share ideas or concerns.
- **To locate the forester nearest you** check out missouriconservation.org/forest/myforester-search.html or call (573) 751-4115.

Missouri's community forests are changing

Two urban tree inventories were conducted in 44 Missouri towns in 1989 and 1999. The 1999 survey was one of the first follow-up surveys done by any state. A comparison of results shows significant changes in Missouri's community forests.

- **Communities have more trees but their condition declined.**
  - In 1989, 66 percent of community trees were good or excellent vs. 1999 when only 24 percent were good or excellent
  - In 1989, there were 46.2 trees per mile vs. 1999 with 62.9 trees per mile
- **Missouri's community forests are becoming more diverse and therefore less susceptible to disease.** The top six tree species constituted 37 percent of those surveyed in 1999, as compared to 53 percent found in 1989.
- **The average value of a Missouri street tree increased $642**, based on the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers' formulas.
- **In 1999, 12 percent of all urban trees were "topped,"** making them vulnerable to pests and diseases and shortening their life spans. Topping also weaken trees, turning them into community hazards. *A topped tree is a dangerous tree.*

Is your town like most Missouri communities?

A 2002 survey of public officials showed that…

- **Most communities budget no dollars for tree care**. They manage their community trees by responding to a crisis, such as ice damage or a tree down across a road.
- **Most communities fund tree-care activities from general revenue.**
- Communities with a population of 5,000 or under **seldom participate in community forestry cost-share programs**. Communities that are willing to budget for tree care activities or that have public-tree ordinances are more likely to participate in state cost-share programs. St. Louis suburban communities seem to been using cost-share programs more than communities in the suburbs of Kansas City.
- **Most communities locate tree care responsibility in many different departments.**
- Communities with populations fewer than 5,000 or greater than 150,000 **feel the most strongly that their community is not adequately addressing tree care during development.**
- **Do not have a full-time person employed to care for trees** and are unlikely to have even one person who deals with trees occasionally.
- **Do not employ anyone with a degree in forestry**, horticulture or related subject.
- **Do not have a public tree ordinance** or a written community-forest management plan.

Missourians care about trees

A 2004 survey of randomly selected Missourians showed that **the following issues were important to them:**

- Quality of natural resources
- Having trees on streets and in parks
- Making sure fewer trees are lost during development
- Managing stormwater runoff

- Respondents also felt that Missouri wasn't doing as well in addressing **tree-loss during development and stormwater runoff.**
- **Caring for new trees after planting, removing trees that might break and cause injury or property damage, and planting trees** were identified as "important" activities in a community tree program.
- Missourians in communities with a population greater than 5,000 showed a marked concern for protecting or replacing trees during development through passage of a **tree preservation ordinance**. The associated impact on property values, stormwater runoff, reduced aesthetics, trust in government and development costs were all identified as reasons that influenced individual decisions.
- Residents in communities with a population of 50,000 or more, in the St. Louis and Kansas City suburbs and the cities of St. Louis and Kansas City show **strong support for a ballot issue establishing a tree fund** supported by a tax of $5.00 or less per household. The amount of the tax, community responsibility for trees, tree condition, trust in government, and other community priorities/needs were all identified as reasons that influenced an individual's decision.
- Survey results clearly show that the majority of Missourians are **unaware if their community has achieved certification** by The National Arbor Day Foundation as a *Tree City USA.*

Make your town a model Missouri community

The *Tree City USA* program is sponsored by The National Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. It provides direction, technical assistance, public attention and national recognition for community forestry programs in thousands of towns and cities that more than 93 million Americans call home.

TREE CITY USA®

To qualify as a *Tree City USA*, a community must meet four standards:

1. Designate by ordinance **a tree board or forestry department** to be legally responsible for care of public trees.
2. **Adopt a tree-care ordinance** that determines public tree-care policies for planting, maintenance and removals. The ordinance also designates the board or department responsible for writing and implementing an annual community-forestry work plan.
3. Show an annual expense of at least **$2 per capita for tree management.**
4. **Hold an Arbor Day event**, complete with an Arbor Day proclamation.

These four standards set the framework for a sustained community forestry program that proactively manages its tree infrastructure. Certification should be a goal of every Missouri community. More information on this program can be found at www.arborday.org.