

March 25, 2006

# Cleveland named Tree City USA

*2005 highlights include reforestation project along the greenway, trees at Fletcher Park; City to plant trees in the rights-of-way at Habitat-for-Humanity's Sain Village for Arbor Day 2006*

CLEVELAND, Tenn.—The city of Cleveland has received its 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive Tree City USA award by the National Arbor Day Foundation, according to Mayor Tom Rowland.

A Tree City USA community is required to have a tree care ordinance, a board or department responsible for implementing a comprehensive community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita, and an Arbor Day observance and proclamation. Dan Hartman, the city's urban forester, leads Cleveland's forestry division, and the city also has a tree board.

"I'm very proud of this award because it illustrates our determination to make Cleveland a better place to live," said Rowland. "Our focused effort on softer services like tree plantings and other quality-of-life issues is one of the things that sets Cleveland apart from many other growing communities in Tennessee."

Mayor Rowland, in 1992, challenged the community to plant 30,000 trees, about one per city resident at the time, by 2000. The city, along with residents and private businesses, easily surpassed this goal, according to Rowland.

The city planted 179 trees and trimmed more than 2,980 trees in 2005, according to Hartman. The urban forestry division is responsible for care and maintenance of trees, flowerbeds and designated landscaped areas, in addition to mowing and trimming.

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The city, in 2005, was awarded a \$5,000 grant through the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry, to reforest along Phase II and the Home Depot section of the Cleveland Bradley County Greenway. The project includes the planting of 99 trees of 12 different species in available rights-of-way. The beautification project includes another 17 trees to shade the parking lot at Fletcher Park, the city's 72-acre passive park on Tennessee Nursery Road.

Species include Swamp White Oak, American Hophornbeam, Green Ash, Red Maple, Serviceberry, Canadian Hemlock, Tulip Poplar, London Plane Tree, Cucumber Magnolia, Bald Cypress, River Birch, American Linden, Red-Twigged Dogwood and Yellow-Twigged Dogwood.

The city is using matching funds by the Allan Jones Foundation and a portion of a \$5,000 donation by Cleveland Utilities to fund the project. Planting began late last year and the project is now completed. The city also received similar grants twice in the past three years. Those projects focused on beautifying the north and south entrances to Cleveland along Lee Highway.

"Trees are a vital component of the infrastructure in our cities and towns, and they provide environmental and economical benefits," said John Rosenow, president of the National Arbor Day Foundation. "A community, and its citizens, that recognize these benefits and provide needed care for its trees deserves recognition and thanks."

Added Rowland, "I am especially thankful to the members of the Cleveland Tree Board and the employees of the forestry division of the Public Works Department for all of their hard work."

Rowland said the city will hold an Arbor Day ceremony with elected officials, staff and members of the tree board on Friday, April 28, at 10:30 a.m. State officials will be on hand to present the city with its Tree City USA award, and forestry crews will also plant eight trees on public property at Sain Village, near 14<sup>th</sup> Street and Pond Street. Sain Village is a cluster of Habitat for Humanity homes.

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Last Arbor Day, forestry crews and Tree Board members planted trees along Phase I of the Cleveland Bradley County Greenway. Two years ago, the city unveiled its tree nursery on Mouse Creek Road. The project is a public-private cooperative effort between the city and the Allan Jones Foundation, which donated funds for irrigation, moving a fence and graveling the road to the nursery, which has a capacity of about 600 trees.

The Arbor Day Foundation is a non-profit organization that helps people plant and care for trees. It sponsors the Tree City USA program with the cooperation of the National Association of State Foresters and the USDA Forest Service.

The members of the Cleveland Tree Board are first district Councilwoman Bambi Hines, chairman; Tara Brown, vice chairman; Jo Benjamin; Janice Cheek; Pat Ensley; Dennis Epperson; Steve Hixson, Allan Jones and John Thomason.