
TREE CITY USA: TAKING PRIDE IN A GREENER COMMUNITY

by Holly Dentner

Perhaps you've noticed Tree City USA signs along the highway or as you pass through a neighboring community. Eighty-five Missouri towns and cities have installed these signs because they earned Tree City USA recognition and take pride in that distinction. More importantly, the people who live in those communities enjoy the real and tangible benefits of having a greener, healthier community.

Tree City USA is a national recognition program sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation, in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, the National Association of State Foresters, and state forest agencies such as the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). By meeting four fundamental standards, any incorporated municipality of any size can qualify for the program.

Those four standards require each municipality to maintain a tree board or department, establish a tree care ordinance, develop a community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita, and celebrate Arbor Day each year with a public observance and proclamation. In return, communities reap the benefits of a healthy, sustainable canopy of trees.

For the communities already a part of Tree City USA, 2016 marks a special reason to celebrate. This year, the national Tree City USA program is 40 years old. Communities across the country can take pride in four decades of an "urban forest."



celebration and encourages all 85 Missouri Tree City USA communities to do the same. Part of that celebration will include a special event at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis on Sept. 12. The event coincides with the Missouri Municipal League's Annual Conference. Missouri's current Tree City USA communities should watch for more information about the special celebration.

To make sure the Tree City USA program continues strong well into the future, MDC has set a new goal to add 40 new communities to

the program over the next five years. That means department foresters are ready to help any municipality interested in joining the program. MDC will have a Tree City USA booth to answer questions and fill in the details of the program at the Missouri Municipal League's Conference in September.

Applying for the Tree City USA program is simple and recognition is outstanding. There are thousands of communities across the country that proudly install roadside signs, fly the Tree City USA flag and renew their application each year.

Learn more about Missouri's Tree City USA program at the Missouri Department of Conservation's website, <http://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZZh>, or visit the national Tree City USA website at <http://arborday.org/treecityusa>. □



Only 16 cities nationwide have been in the program for the full 40 years, and none of them are in Missouri. However, the state has its fair share of communities with more than 30+ years of participation, including Des Peres, Ellisville, Fenton, Mexico, Springfield, St. Louis, University City and Webster Groves.

In honor of the anniversary, and to shine the spotlight on this successful and important community program, the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) has joined in the

Holly Dentner is the forestry field program supervisor for outreach and communications at the Missouri Department of Conservation. Holly supports all communication efforts from the forestry division at the department. She also manages the Trees Work campaign that helps to elevate public awareness and understanding of the importance of trees. Learn more at www.treeswork.org.



TREE CITY USA® Arbor Day Foundation

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Ash Grove | Gladstone | Raymore |
| Augusta | Glendale | Raytown |
| Ballwin | Grandview | Richmond Heights |
| Belton | Greendale | Rock Hill |
| Branson | Hannibal | Sedalia |
| Brentwood | Herculaneum | Springfield |
| Brookfield | Hermann | St. James |
| Brunswick | Independence | St. Joseph |
| Cape Girardeau | Jackson | St. Louis |
| Carthage | Jefferson City | St. Peters |
| Centralia | Joplin | Sturgeon |
| Chesterfield | Kahoka | Sunset Hills |
| Chillicothe | Kansas City | Town & Country |
| Clayton | Kirksville | Trenton |
| Clinton | Kirkwood | Twin Oaks |
| Columbia | Lake St. Louis | Union |
| Crestwood | Lee's Summit | University City |
| Creve Coeur | Liberty | Velda Village Hills |
| Cuba | Maplewood | Warrensburg |
| Dardenne Prairie | Marshfield | Warrenton |
| Des Peres | Maryland Heights | Warson Woods |
| Dexter | Maryville | Washington |
| Ellisville | Memphis | Webster Groves |
| Elsberry | Mountain View | Wentzville |
| Eureka | North Kansas City | West Plains |
| Exeter | O'Fallon | Wildwood |
| Fayette | Ozark | Willard |
| Fenton | Parkville | |
| Florissant | Peculiar | |

TREE LINE USA AND TREE CAMPUS USA

The Tree City USA program also includes two other programs: Tree Line USA and Tree Campus USA. Tree Line USA recognizes best practices in the utility industry, while Tree Campus USA recognizes a commitment to trees at two- and four-year universities. Just like Tree City USA, each program has established standards for participation. In Missouri, there are 11 utilities and seven universities in the programs. Learn more at <http://arborday.org/treecityusa>.

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WHY YOUR CITY SHOULD BE A TREE CITY USA COMMUNITY



Studies show that for every dollar invested, there is often a four or five dollar annual return in environmental services. Green infrastructure is the only part of a city's infrastructure that appreciates in value over time. By becoming a Tree City USA, your community is ensuring that its trees will benefit your community in many ways, including:

- Reduce costs for energy, stormwater management, and erosion control. Trees yield three to five times their cost in overall benefits to a city.
- Cut energy consumption by up to 25 percent. Studies indicate that as few as three additional trees planted around each building in the U.S. could save \$2 billion annually in energy costs.
- Boost property values across your community. Properly placed trees can increase property values from 7-20 percent. Buildings in wooded areas rent more quickly and tenants stay longer.
- Build stronger ties to your neighborhood and community. Trees and green spaces directly correlate to greater connections to neighbors.
- Improve public health. Research has consistently shown the positive impact trees have on people, including worker satisfaction, students' ability to concentrate, faster healing time for hospital patients, and lower blood pressure among senior citizens.

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