

Arbor Day Foundation Unveils Tree Campus USA Program

College and university tree managers across the country finally have something to cheer about. Over the past year, the Arbor Day Foundation has been ironing out the standards aimed to take college tree programs to the next level. Like its successful counterpart Tree City USA, the goal is to create the groundwork for tree programs through basic operating standards while advocating community support and collaborations with local agencies. With approximately 148 institutions of higher education in Texas alone, this program has a great opportunity to make an impact here in the Lone Star State.

To commemorate the unveiling of this new program, the Arbor Day Foundation will be conducting the Campus Tree Tour 2008 in which several campuses across the country will be chosen to celebrate this fall through large scale tree planting events. In partnership with the Toyota Motor Corporation, the Foundation aims at gathering campus faculty, staff, students, non profit organizations and city forestry communities to participate in the planting of up to as many as 100 trees per location. Recruitment has been positive and with any luck, a Texas locale will be chosen for this historic event.

The new Tree Campus USA standards may prove to be challenging for many campus tree programs. However, the accreditation serves as a fantastic goal that any campus administration would be eager to obtain. Campus tree managers should look at this accreditation as an opportunity to bring their well earned efforts to the forefront of the campus community and overall campus plan.

To earn Tree Campus USA accreditation a handful of stipulations must be met: First, a campus tree advisory committee must be created consisting of students, faculty, facilities management and member of local forestry agency. Second, a campus tree care plan and forestry program must be established with dedicated annual expenditures established. Ideally campuses would work towards annual tree expenditures of \$3.00 per full-time enrolled student. An Arbor Day observance would be required and in the spirit of the Tree Campus USA initiative, a service learning project implemented. This project would provide an opportunity to engage the student population with projects related

to trees and can be part of a campus or community initiative.

As mentioned earlier, this program can assist campus tree managers bring their efforts to the forefront of their institutions. More importantly though, the Tree Campus USA program provides a unique opportunity to engage our future policy makers and most loyal and vocal advocates in the community.

To obtain more information on this new campus initiative, please visit the Arbor Day Foundation's website at: www.arborday.org/treeCampusUSA or contact Michelle Scribner at 1-888-448-7337.

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