

Teamwork Strengthens Community Forestry



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BULLETIN**

In today's complex world, successful collaboration is essential for the management of healthy community forests. Whether in a large city or small community, the planting and care of trees will be at their best when volunteers, city officials, and businesses work together with clearly identified roles and responsibilities.

Small- and Medium-Size Communities

BETTENDORF, IOWA

Smaller communities often struggle with funding issues because of the small number of potential donors, lack of local corporations, and a small pool of volunteers. But if there is the will for action and a small cadre of residents who recognize the importance of trees, great things can happen. Bettendorf, Iowa, provides a good example. This community of 31,000 supports a very active organization called Bettendorf Trees Are Us. It was started in 1991 when the local utility offered matching funds to stimulate tree planting. Today, a core group of 15 members spearheads the work, with projects receiving help from Master Gardeners, scout groups, high school classes, and even low-security prisoners at the county jail.

Over the years, 500 volunteers have helped plant and maintain more than 1,600 trees. Grant support from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Mid-American Energy Company, and others has been a big help. However, a key to success has been the cooperative attitude of city government. For more than 15 years, Parks & Recreation Director Steve Grimes has been part of the committee. Moreover, the city includes a regular budget item to provide a consistent base of financial support.

The result of this teamwork has meant not only more trees and the ecoservices they provide, but community spirit, a high degree of appreciation for trees, and the knowledge to plant and care for them properly. Projects conducted by Bettendorf Trees Are Us have included:

- Annual tree-planting events at schools, in parks, along a recreation trail, and on street rights-of-way
- Mulching
- Information sheets inserted with sewer billings
- Videos on tree care for the local TV access channel
- Tree care pamphlets
- School programs
- A "Tree Walk" self-guided tour pamphlet



Photo Courtesy of TreeUtah

Few communities can offer the full potential of trees without the help of volunteers. This team is part of a planting project sponsored by TreeUtah and the Alliance for Community Trees in South Salt Lake City, Utah.

Included in this issue are inspiring examples of partnerships involving nonprofit organizations, utilities, corporations, city governments, and statewide organizations.