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City of Duluth Parks and Recreation Division

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SUBJECT: City of Duluth Celebrates Arbor Day 2012

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City of Duluth Celebrates Arbor Day 2012

Mayor Don Ness and community members gathered to declare today, May 17th, Arbor Day. This day marked the first of hundreds of trees to be planted this season in Duluth with the first ceremonial tree being planted at Chambers Grove.

Today's 2012 Arbor Day celebration revolved around the planting of trees resulting from several new initiatives announced by the City of Duluth.

City staff built a 50 X 60 foot holding bed at its Buildings and Grounds Maintenance Facility in which over 500 bare root trees were placed as they await planting spaces. In it are over ten species of trees, including maple, oak, elm, crabapple, and hackberry.

Many people intuitively feel the value of large, urban trees, but their many effects can actually be quantitatively measured. It is these values that lead the City of Duluth to rededicating itself to the re-establishment of Duluth as a Tree City USA in 2010.

For example, studies have found that: apartments and offices rent more quickly in areas with trees; customers are willing to pay up to 10% for certain products from businesses on tree-lined streets; a great reduction in crime and physical violence in areas with high levels of greenery; patients have higher recovery rates when hospital windows have views of trees; female adolescents have higher self-esteem in areas with trees; and, workers who view nature from their desks feel more patient and less frustrated and have more enthusiasm for their jobs and satisfaction with their lives. In addition, asphalt streets last longer when shaded by trees; proper landscaping including trees can reduce air conditioning costs by up to 50%; property values increase up to 20% for those with trees; there is a reduction of the heat island effect in cities with more canopy cover; and, trees reduce atmospheric pollution and capture storm water.

To help retain its Tree City status, during the summer of 2011, Duluth applied for and received its second Americorps member; part of a new program through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency called the Minnesota GreenCorps. This Urban Forestry Specialist is working with the Tree Commission to develop a Master Tree Plan, coordinating Arbor Day tree plantings with schools, working with volunteers to complete a street tree inventory, and helping to organize neighborhood planting

parties, which will result in several hundred trees being planted in neighborhoods throughout Duluth, such as Morgan Park and East Hillside.

2011 marked the 23rd year that Duluth was named a Tree City USA. The Tree City status was awarded in part due to the 655 volunteers who spent 2172 hours working on tree related projects in Duluth last year. In addition, nearly 3000 trees were planted in 2011 by both volunteers and city maintenance workers. To display our commitment to urban forestry, two Tree City USA recognition signs have been installed under the population signs on highway 2 coming in from Proctor, and highway 23 in Fond du Lac.

Duluth's 2012 Arbor Day will prove to be an important milestone in the timeline of Duluth's Urban Forestry history. With threats from insects like the Gypsy Moth and Emerald Ash Borer at our doorstep, increasing the diversity of the tree canopy is vital to a healthy urban forest. A citizen forestry program that includes tree inventory and learning about invasive species will now be expanded to including tree planting. Those who would be interested in having a tree planted on their boulevard should contact Buildings and Grounds Maintenance at 218-730-4490. Those wishing to volunteer for tree inventory or tree planting nights and weekends should contact the City Tree Planting Volunteer Coordinator at 218-269-4712

Celebrate Arbor Day 2012 - plant a tree!

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