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Troup TREEmendous kicks off yearlong salute to trees

(Friday, April 24, 2009) Troup County commissioners and a volunteer committee this morning kicked off Troup TREEmendous, a yearlong tribute to trees designed to promote the county's Heritage Tree Program.

The new program invites citizens to nominate trees in unincorporated Troup County for inclusion on a Heritage Tree Registry. Nominees designated as heritage trees by a County arborist will be protected from being cut down or destroyed.



Troup County Commissioners (l-r) Buck Davis, Ricky Wolfe and Ken Smith join Troup TREEmendous members Nancy Green, Sam Breyfogle and Todd Stephens to dedicate elm and redbud trees planted in front of the Mike Daniel Recreation Center in observance of Arbor Day.

In introducing the yearlong celebration of trees, the Troup TREEmendous Committee planted nine trees Wednesday in observance of National Arbor Day, which is today. Planted in

front of the Mike Daniel Recreation Center at 1220 Lafayette Parkway, the trees were dedicated this morning in an observance led by Troup TREEmendous Chairman Nancy Green.

“We are very excited about our first project for Troup TREEmendous,” said Green. “Trees preserve our small town and rural atmosphere. We need to plant, preserve and protect them whenever and wherever possible.”

Troup Board of Commissioners Chairman Ricky Wolfe dedicated the trees by reading an Arbor Day proclamation issued by the commission.

“Trees protect and increase property values, enhance the economic vitality of our county’s business areas, enhance the county’s physical and aesthetic environment, and in general protect and enhance the quality of life and general welfare of citizens,” Wolfe said. “Trees, wherever they are planted, are a potential source of human joy and spiritual renewal.”

Planted in three separate islands along Lafayette Parkway are five Princeton elms, four redbud trees and about 30 oak-leaf hydrangeas, all native to Georgia. At maturity, the elms grow up to 80 feet tall and 30 feet wide, while the redbuds typically reach heights of 20 feet and widths of 25 feet. The hydrangeas will grow up to eight feet high and eight feet wide at maturity.

Troup TREEmendous researched trees and accent plants that were native to Georgia, drought tolerant and low maintenance, all of which the elms, redbuds and hydrangeas proved to be, according to Green who worked on the Arbor Day planting project with fellow committee members Todd Stephens and Sam Breyfogle.

“Sam, Todd and I were in agreement from the first to showcase Georgia’s native species,” Green said. “The trees and plants we decided upon should, after one year, be almost maintenance free. Todd did a great job of researching the elms and in designing our plan. And, our committee wants to thank the Troup County Master Gardeners for their help and support.”

Stephens, an architect with Smith Design Group, said reintroducing elms into the community falls in line with the Troup TREEmendous mission to protect and promote trees throughout Troup County.

“I was young when I first heard LaGrange called ‘The City of Elms and Roses,’” he said. “I recall asking my grandfather which trees were elms. Not seeing any around, he told me of the blight that took them away. Elms were one of my first thoughts when I heard of the Heritage Tree Program. It’s a great way to regain some of our heritage that is passing away.”

Stephens noted that roses already are planted at the Recreation Center.

The Princeton elm grows about three feet per year and is praised as the “Great American Shade Tree,” he added. “These trees should look nice in a short time but won’t approach maturity for 20 to 30 years. I like the thought of watching them grow with Jeffrey, my 9-year-old.”

County Planner Nancy Seegar said Troup's Heritage Tree Register will document noteworthy trees or groves of trees and protect them for years to come. Citizens may nominate trees within the unincorporated county and, with written consent of property owners, trees will be reviewed by a County arborist. After a nominee earns the heritage tree distinction, it becomes unlawful for anyone to remove, cut, prune or injure the tree without a permit from the County arborist. Heritage trees may be removed only under certain circumstances, such as when they become a safety hazard or are diseased.

Trees may be nominated on the basis of history, age, size, species or ecological value.

The Troup TREEmendous yearlong tribute to trees will include awarding certificates to heritage tree owners, holding essay and art contests in county schools, and exhibiting tree-related artwork and memorabilia at Legacy Museum on Main, according to Green who said the year's events will culminate with a downtown street party on or near Arbor Day 2010.