

2011 March 2
Alamosa Trees
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Bleak Street to Undergo Transformation

The desolate, brown landscape along eastbound Highway 160 (6th Street) through Alamosa is about to become greener. At least 20 trees will be planted at 5 locations along the corridor during Alamosa's Arbor Week, May 1 - 7. The trees will be a big help in welcoming Alamosa visitors coming from the west, not to mention brightening citizens' travels through town.

The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the Tree Board received a \$5,000 Xcel Energy grant through the Colorado Tree Coalition. DPR will put in another \$1,000. The Rio Grande Scenic Railroad is also involved since it owns much of the land along the south side of 6th Street. My thanks to Heinz Bergann, DPR Director, and Keith Wood, State Forester, for writing the grant and to Xcel Energy for funding it.

Be part of the transformation! Come help us plant during Arbor Week, May 1 - 7! Personnel from the Parks Department will dig the holes and citizens will plant the trees. I'll post the schedule in this column during April. Email me at Marilyn@AlamosaTrees.net and I'll make sure to keep you posted.

The Tree Board recommended a combination of Ponderosa Pine, Autumn Purple Ash, American Elm, Hackberry, Celebration Maple, Korean Sun Pear, and Shade Master Honey Locust. For more details on these trees, visit AlamosaTrees.net.

The 5 planting locations are: 1) adjacent to the settling pond at the intersection of Highways 160 and 285, 2) south of Sonic on the north side of the highway, 3-4) the south side of the highway on both corners of the intersection with Ross, and 5) the south side of Highway 160 between San Juan and State Streets.

We'll plant trees to minimize any winter shading in an effort to reduce ice retention. We'll also plant smaller varieties, such as Korean Sun Pear, between San Juan and State since the land is used for railroad parking and the trees will be closer to the street.

The settling pond area is the only location with a water source. DPR will water the others weekly during the summer for several years using their water truck, which also waters the Main Street flower beds. The 3-year maintenance plan includes water, mulch monitoring, and shape and structural pruning, as necessary. This doesn't mean the trees won't be monitored after 3 years, but it's just the first 3 that are required by the grant.

We'll stake trees, as necessary, for one year. Why just one year? Trees establish more quickly and develop stronger trunk and root systems if they are not staked, according to the International Society of Arboriculture. However, in windy conditions, such as where we're planting, they recommend one year of staking to allow the trees to develop stabilizing roots.

Alamosa has been a Tree City for 20 years. I've worked with the Tree Board for just over 2 years and have loved working with people to beautify our city with trees. The trees that were planted last Arbor Week in Diamond, Zapata, Friends, and Jardin Hermosa seem to be doing well. Of course, we'll know more when they leaf out in late May or early June.

I can hardly wait to drive down 6th Street and see leaves blowing in the breeze. This looks to be another “tree-ific” year! OK, I couldn’t help myself. This came from the town of Windsor’s Tree Board tagline, “Keep Windsor Tree-ific”.

Sign up for the PRUNING WORKSHOP: The State Forest Service and Alamosa Tree Board are hosting a day-long Tree Pruning Workshop on Tuesday, April 19. Vince Urbina, Colorado State Forester, will present. The morning session will be classroom style and the afternoon session will be in the field. The workshop is limited to 20 people and the cost is \$10, which includes beverages and a homemade lunch. For more information or to register call the State Forest Service office at 587-0915.

“My first job was working for parks in Dodge City. It was so dry the trees chased down the dogs.”
Doc Cotton