



Arbor Week and Tree City USA Growth Award

by Marilyn Loser

2012 April 11

Alamosa will celebrate Arbor Week 2012 from Saturday, April 28, through Friday, May 4. Please come help us plant trees along Sixth Street and in the Alamosa Cemetery. And help us celebrate being a Tree City USA for the 22nd year and for receiving their Growth Award for the 11th time.

Did you know Alamosa is one of only 8 Colorado communities to receive the Sterling Tree City Growth award? The Sterling Award, a part of Tree City USA, is presented to communities that have received the Growth Award for 10 years. According to the Arbor Day website, the other 7 communities are Highlands Ranch, Durango, Loveland, Windsor, Grand Junction, Westminster, and Lamar.

Heinz Bergann, Director of Alamosa Parks and Recreation, keeps track of arbor related activities and applied for the distinction. The last time Alamosa received the award was in 2003. Eligibility for the Growth Award requires a city to spend at least as much on its community forestry program during a year than it did in the preceding year and to complete several eligible activities.

Alamosa spent approximately \$32,000 on Alamosa's community forestry program in 2011. Three specific activities were cited in the application. 1) The City of Alamosa Parks Department partnered with a local Boy Scout troop, as well as with scouts attending a camporee, to manage tree issues in an area being developed as a public disc-golf course. This two-phase project involved clean-up work and conservation efforts. The disc-golf course was Dillon Vance's Eagle Scout project.

2) The Alamosa Tree Board, Colorado Forest Service, and the City partnered to present an all-day, tree-pruning workshop during April of 2011 presented by Colorado Forester Vince Urbina. The workshop involved an in-class session as well as a hands-on session and was well received by the overflow audience. 3) The AlamosaTrees.net website was significantly improved with tree lists and a searchable database to assist the public in selecting new tree plantings.

As a precursor to Alamosa Arbor Week 2012, Forester Urbina, who conducted the pruning workshop mentioned above, will speak on "Tree Care during Drought" at 6 p.m. on Monday, April 23rd in the Alamosa City Council Chambers. Forester Urbina is known for his well-informed and motivating presentations. The public is invited and light refreshments will be served.

As Colorado experiences one of its warmest springs and continued dry weather (with the exception of last Tuesday's welcome snow), this topic is timely. If temperatures continue to rise, shade from trees will become ever more important.

Speaking of shade, we'll be planting 14 trees in the newer part of the Alamosa Cemetery during Arbor Week. Please join us on Tuesday, May 1, at 4 p.m. – and if you can, bring a shovel! The “Alamosa Cemetery Shade” project is funded through a grant from the Colorado Tree Coalition and Alamosa City funds.

Cub Scout Pack 307 has generously offered to help plant trees along Sixth St. between Ross and State Streets on Saturday morning, April 28. These trees will accompany the winding sidewalk on the south side of the street. Funds for the trees were procured through a non-matching \$5,000 grant from Xcel Energy Foundation and Colorado Tree Coalition.

We're looking for volunteers to plant more of the Sixth St. trees on Monday, April 30, at 11 a.m. Please stop by and bring a shovel if you have one! Or contact me at 719.589.3295 or Marilyn@AlamosaTrees.net.

A bit of background on Tree City USA and Arbor Day. Tree City USA is part of the Arbor Day Foundation and “encourages, supports, and strengthens effective urban and community forestry programs in diverse communities nationwide through recognition, education, and publicity.”

As many people know, Arbor Day began in Nebraska. It was founded by J. Sterling Morton, originally from Detroit, Michigan. Along with other pioneers, Morton and his wife moved to the Nebraska Territory in 1854. The first Arbor Day was celebrated April 10, 1872. “It's estimated that more than one million trees were planted that day,” according to the Arbor Day website.

“His fellow pioneers missed their trees. But, more importantly, trees were needed as windbreaks to keep soil in place, for fuel and building materials, and for shade from the hot sun.”

These conditions apply to Alamosa today!

“Trees they are our friends; They are tall, strong and leafy; They fill the earth with shade and oxygen; Trees need our protection; Let's plant some more” by Ramona, a 5th grade student at Taft Elementary School, Idaho