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The City of Jefferson Receives Urban Forestry Grants

Georgia Forestry Commission Provides Community Grants

(Jefferson, Ga. - August 17, 2009) - The City of Jefferson and the Jefferson Heritage Tree Council kicked off two urban forestry projects last week - *Making the Shade at Hughey Park* and *The City of Jefferson Sustainable Community Forest Project*. These two projects are funded through cost-share grants awarded by the Georgia Forestry Commission's (GFC) Sustainable Community Forestry Program and Urban & Community Forestry Grant Program. The Hughey Park project has been awarded \$2000, and the Jefferson Sustainable Community Forest Project has been awarded \$19,565.

The purpose of the "Making the Shade" project is to plant trees at the Rev. V.S. Hughey Park on Gordon St., which is used by neighborhood children and the Boys and Girls Club of Jefferson. This project will provide the park's playground area with critical shade that will reduce the effects of high temperatures and will ensure a healthy and safe place to play for the many school age children who utilize this park. The Hughey Park project is the first GFC "Making the Shade" grant awarded to a park, marking the expansion of this program to include city parks that serve local schoolchildren. Previously, the grant program has been confined to tree plantings on elementary school campuses. The Hughey Park trees will be planted during Jefferson's Arbor Day celebration in February of 2010.

The second grant, for the multifaceted Jefferson Sustainable Community Forest Project, will enable the city to develop a comprehensive and integrated approach to managing its urban forest resources. The grant award will fund the services of a team of community forest professionals under the direction of one of the state's most highly respected urban foresters, Certified Arborist and Registered Forester Connie Head, who will provide routine urban forest management and technical assistance to the city of Jefferson and who will coordinate the elements of a sustainable community forestry program, including the following:

- completing phase two of the Jefferson Tree Inventory (school grounds and city facilities)
- conducting a study of Jefferson's tree canopy cover and impervious surfaces
- providing review and on-site assessment of residential, commercial and industrial development plans and variance requests involving tree issues
- reviewing and assessing Jefferson's tree ordinance

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- providing training in up-to-date tree maintenance practices for city and school system and city staff
- strengthening the Heritage Tree Council as effective community forestry advocates
- hosting a Community Forestry Roundtable with area tree boards to discuss common problems and unique solutions
- developing a strategic community forest vision and a Comprehensive Community Forest Management Plan for the City of Jefferson

"These community grants are a giant leap from where we started as a council nearly three years ago," said Dugan. "They will help us lay the groundwork for a long term plan that will ensure Jefferson enjoys a healthy and diverse tree canopy for many years to come."

Dugan continued, "The city and the tree council are, of course, the primary partners in the two projects, but we could not have secured these grants without the wholehearted support of Main Street Jefferson, the Jefferson Garden Club, the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, Keep Jackson County Beautiful and the Jefferson City School System.

GFC Associate Chief Larry Morris concurred, "Strong community partnerships are definitely one of the things we look for when awarding grants."

"The City of Jefferson recognizes the countless benefits trees bring to our community - from clean air and cooling shade to economic vitality," said John Ward, Jefferson City Manager. "We are thankful for the GFC's efforts to provide these funds to communities like ours across the state, and we are pleased to share them with our residents."

Designated by the Farm Bill in 1990, the objective of the funding is to enhance Georgia's community forests and build awareness of their importance and impact statewide. In total, \$431,558 in funding has been awarded to 38 different projects in Georgia in 2009.

"The Georgia Forestry Commission is pleased to provide funding for capacity-building programs, such as these, that help increase tree cover," GFC Director Robert Farris said. "We are proud to kick off these projects in partnership with our congressional and state legislative leadership."

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The Georgia Forestry Commission

A variety of forestry-related literature is available to the public at Georgia Forestry Commission offices statewide. Further information about urban forestry grants and a statewide list of grants is available on the Georgia Forestry Commission Web site at www.gatrees.org. For more information about the "Making the Shade" program, see www.gfc.state.ga.us/CommunityForests/MakingtheShade.cfm; and for more information about the Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program, see www.gfc.state.ga.us/CommunityForests/Grants.cfm

The Jefferson Heritage Tree Council

Formed in 2007, the Jefferson Heritage Tree Council (JHTC) is focused on the preservation, planting and stewardship of trees in the City of Jefferson. The council works to promote a healthy community forest, to encourage protection of mature, significant and historic trees throughout the area, to educate the public about the vital benefits of trees, and to actively engage Jefferson residents in attaining these benefits now and in the future. In serving its community, the council supports a comprehensive and sustainable approach to community forestry management and local ordinances that protect the public tree resource.

For more information about these projects, the tree council and its programs, or about how you can become involved in protecting Jefferson's vital tree canopy, contact Mary Dugan at 706-367-4362 or Barbara Johnson at 706-367-9888.