



U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS AND THE HOME DEPOT FOUNDATION ANNOUNCE WINNERS OF SECOND ANNUAL COMMUNITY TREES AWARD

Philadelphia, Wilmington, Del., Albuquerque, N.M. and Orland Park, Ill. Receive \$200,000

LOS ANGELES, June 23, 2007 – The U.S. Conference of Mayors® and The Home Depot® Foundation today announced the winners of the second annual Awards of Excellence for Community Trees and Urban Forestry at the Conference of Mayors 75th Annual Meeting in Los Angeles.

Grants were awarded to each mayor and their respective city's non-profit partner to further the goal of promoting healthy, more stable communities through the strategic use and management of trees in these urban areas. The city of Philadelphia and the city of Wilmington, Del., won first place in the large and small city category, respectively; each city received a \$75,000 grant. The runner-up cities of Albuquerque, N.M., (large) and Orland Park, Ill., (small) each received a \$25,000 grant. Award categories were determined by population – one category for large cities with populations more than 100,000, and the other for small cities with populations less than 100,000.

There were also six cities presented with honorable mention awards, including Atlanta; Chicago; Cincinnati, Ohio; Fayetteville, Ark.; Minneapolis and Tulsa, Okla. Each honorable mention city received a \$2,500 grant.

Of the more than 75 applications submitted for the Awards, these project winners were selected by an independent advisory committee comprised of experts in the fields of urban forestry, environment and sustainable community development. Committee members include representatives from the USDA Forest Service, National Arbor Day Foundation® and The Enterprise Foundation®, among others.

“As our nation becomes more and more focused on the environment, the importance of trees cannot be overstated. They give us cleaner air to breathe and help protect us from climate change, said Douglas H. Palmer, president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and mayor of Trenton, N.J. “We salute The Home Depot Foundation for the opportunity to highlight how valuable trees are to our cities and our lives.”

“The Home Depot Foundation believes that community trees make enormous contributions to our social, economic and overall well-being and that the urban forest is one of the essential building blocks of healthy, stable communities,” said Kelly Caffarelli, executive director, The Home Depot Foundation. “Through programs like the Awards of Excellence, we reward cities that share this mission by taking an active role in demonstrating the importance of the strategic use of trees in our nation's cities.”

This year, in addition to the Awards of Excellence, the Conference, in partnership with The Home Depot Foundation, will combine two existing task forces of mayors – community trees and sustainable development – to take a more holistic approach to examining city environments and identifying ways in which mayors can integrate community forestry and environmentally responsible development programs

to build healthier, stronger, more stable communities. Rosemarie Ives, mayor of Redmond, Calif., will act as chair of the combined task force.

Information about the Award of Excellence for Community Trees and Urban Forestry application process for 2008 will be available in November at www.homedepotfoundation.org.

National Winner – Large City Category (population 100,000 or more)

City of Philadelphia / Pennsylvania Horticultural Society – Non-profit Partner

As a result of a 2003 study, which estimated that nearly 34,000 acres of heavy tree cover were lost in a five-county region, Governor Ed Rendell set aside money to help bring together potential partners to address restoring tree cover in Southeast Pennsylvania. As a result, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society® worked with the city of Philadelphia to develop and launch the TreeVitalize program. In 2006, more than 22,000 trees were planted involving 4,000 volunteers and the investment of \$5.3 million for staffing, planting and maintenance. The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's program brought together a diverse group of partners representing numerous local and national government agencies, community activists, funders, business leaders and community development corporations to address the need for trees and how their strategic use can benefit the residents of Philadelphia.

National Runner-up – Large City Category

City of Albuquerque, N.M. / Tree New Mexico – Non-profit Partner

In 2006, Mayor Martin Chavez launched the Urban Forestry Improvement Initiative committing to plant 2,000 trees per year throughout the city of New Mexico. The initiative focused not only on planting additional trees, but also ensuring the integration of these trees into all city functions and planning. By hiring new personnel, dedicating funds and actively incorporating input from all city departments and privately owned lands, the city's program, in partnership with Tree New Mexico (TNM), has already planted thousands of trees, educated countless citizens on the importance of trees, and institutionalized the role of trees into the city's infrastructure. Mayor Chavez's urban forestry initiative is part of a larger goal of environmental health for the city through carbon emission reduction, air, soil and water quality protection and new technologies in energy use reduction.

National Winner – Small City Category (population 100,000 or less)

City of Wilmington, Del. / Delaware Center for Horticulture – Non-profit Partner

Wilmington, Del., Mayor James Baker has been an advocate for urban trees for decades. Evidence to his support is the Wilmington Tree Program, a multi-faceted initiative developed in partnership with the Delaware Center for Horticulture. The Delaware Center for Horticulture completed an online inventory of Wilmington's urban forest in 2002, and this survey showed that the city, as part of this program, has planted more than 5,000 street trees in the past 20 years. Ongoing success of Wilmington's urban forestry program lies with the diversity of its collaborations and its funding sources. Mayor Baker and the Delaware Center for Horticulture have worked closely to secure transportation funds, Community Development Block Grant funding, urban and community forestry dollars and Community Environmental Penalty funds to continue the support of fostering the growth of Wilmington's tree canopy.

National Runner-up – Small City Category

Village of Orland Park, Ill. / Openlands of Orland Park – Non-profit Partner

As a bedroom community of Chicago, the village of Orland Park continues to face the challenges of increasing growth and development, including negative impacts on tree canopy cover, stormwater runoff and wildlife habitat. Understanding the seriousness of these issues, Mayor Dan McLaughlin started the

Tree Program. Through this program, legislation was passed for a \$20 million referendum to purchase and preserve open tracts of land containing old-growth trees, which resulted in the preservation of 300 acres and the planting of more 4,700 large trees. As a result, impacts of development are now minimized and conservation easements and tree mitigation requirements protect trees. Stormwater management has also improved, as trees are now used strategically to help prevent erosion, maintain swales and increase water retention capabilities in soil. The Tree Program demonstrates the benefits of partnership between village departments and diverse community participation.

About The Home Depot Foundation

The Home Depot Foundation is dedicated to improving the health of local communities by supporting the development of affordable, healthy homes for working families and by the strategic planting and preservation of trees in parks, in schoolyards and along city streets. Since its creation in 2002, The Home Depot Foundation has granted nearly \$30 million to non-profit organizations, supported the development of more than 40,000 affordable, healthy homes and planted and preserved more than one million community trees. In 2007, The Home Depot Foundation committed to significantly increase its financial support in these two areas by awarding \$100 million in grants over the next 10 years, which will result in the development of 100,000 affordable, healthy homes for working families and the planting and preservation of more than 3 million community trees. For more information, visit www.homedepotfoundation.org.

About U.S. Conference of Mayors

The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,139 such cities in the country today, each represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor.

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For more information, contact:

Elena Temple
U.S. Conference of Mayors
202-861-6719
etemple@usmayors.org

Mandy Hunsicker
MS&L for The Home Depot Foundation
404-870-6815 (work), 404-558-8636 (mobile)
mandy.hunsicker@mslpr.com