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## ***News Release***

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### **City Tree Board growing its mission**

The Branson Tree Board, established 15 years ago by the Board of Aldermen to develop a tree management program for the city, has taken on new members and enthusiasm to beautify Branson.

“A tree management program for public property was developed a number of years ago, and now our Tree Board is proceeding with a renewed focus on implementation,” said Tara Norback, Branson assistant planner and ex-officio member of the Tree Board. “We are working towards more tree plantings and maintenance of existing trees on public property plus education about the importance of trees to our city residents.”

A city Tree Board is also a requirement for a community to be designated as a Tree City USA. Branson has received this award for the past 15 years, since the inception of its Tree Board.

In addition to Norback, other members of the city’s Tree Board include Dr. Ken Olson, Clark Harris, Ben Kinel, Julie Wolf and Walt Stone.

Olson chairs the Tree Board and as a biologist and botanist he has a special interest in plants and the natural world.

“Trees are a valuable resource not only for their beauty, but also for their practicality in parks and recreation,” said Olson. “Serving on the Tree Board is something I could help with and fit into my interests.”

Olson said his goals are to develop a long-range comprehensive plan that addresses how the city manages trees, and short-term, sponsor a community-wide tree event this fall. This event would involve planting trees on public properties and encouraging residents to plant on their own properties.

“We’ll be checking with local nurseries and landscapers about providing discounts on trees for this event,” said Olson.

Norback said guidelines have been implemented for public works employees in regards to mowing and working around trees to not damage them.

The city also received grant money for several brochures describing the right ways to plant, care for and preserve trees. These brochures are free to the public and available at the Planning and Development Department in Branson City Hall.

A landscape page has been created on the city's website, [www.bransonmo.gov](http://www.bransonmo.gov), and is updated regularly,

Norback said the Tree Board is exploring various options of funding to plant new trees on public property including donations of cash, trees or labor from area residents.

"Our mission, and I'm confident it's one everybody can get behind, is to increase and preserve our urban forest," said Norback.

The city's Tree Board will meet for the remainder of 2010 on the second Wednesday of each month at 1 p.m. in the planning and development department conference room at city hall. The meetings are open to the public. The 2011 meetings have not yet been set.

For more information, contact the city's assistant planner Tara Norback at 337-8544 or online at [tnorback@bransonmo.gov](mailto:tnorback@bransonmo.gov).