

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD, AND FORESTRY

2800 N. Lincoln Boulevard Oklahoma City, OK 73105-4912

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Cameron University recognized at Arbor Week celebration

Oklahoma Forestry Services and the Oklahoma Urban and Community Forestry Council recognized Cameron University on March 16 in Oklahoma City for its achievement in earning Tree Campus USA status. This designation from The Arbor Day Foundation demonstrates a commitment to healthy trees. The event, held at the Oklahoma History Center and attended by representatives of organizations across the state, celebrated the annual kickoff of Oklahoma's Arbor Week which occurs the last full week of March each year.

"We're excited to begin Arbor Week by honoring Oklahoma communities, universities and utility companies that are dedicated to planting and properly caring for trees," said State Forester George Geissler. "Trees provide substantial economic and environmental values that go beyond their beauty."

Participants at the celebration heard a presentation from research forester Dr. David Nowak about ways communities can measure the true value of their urban forests. His research at the State University of New York led to the development of i-Tree, a computer model that assesses the structure, function and value of city or campus trees.

Mark Bays, Oklahoma Forestry Services urban forestry coordinator, led a tree planting ceremony on the grounds of the Oklahoma History Center. A live oak was planted to represent native trees found in the southern part of the state along the Red River. In a 100-year life span, this tree may provide over \$3,600 in environmental benefits according to the i-Tree Design software.

Cameron University has been a Tree Campus USA for three years. To earn this honor, students and staff updated the Campus Tree Care Plan Master Planting List and added new species well-suited to the region. During 2015, the committee incorporated fruit tree plantings in the Community Garden which is a joint project with Fit Kids of Southwest Oklahoma. Over 200 trees were pruned in 2015 and 39 were planted.

(Quote from local person involved with program) _____

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The Tree Campus USA program provides the framework for community forestry management across the United States. Cameron University is among six Oklahoma campuses to achieve this status by meeting core standards of sound urban forestry tree care.

Oklahoma Forestry Services encourages Oklahomans to use Arbor Week as a time to plant new trees and take care of existing ones. They are also asking residents to check with their local communities for Arbor Week celebrations and activities that will be taking place across the state.

For more information about becoming a designated Tree Campus USA, contact Oklahoma Forestry Services, a division of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry, at (405) 522-6150 or www.forestry.ok.gov or The Arbor Day Foundation at www.arborday.org.

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Photo caption: Representatives from Tree Campus USA, Tree City USA and Tree Line USA utilities across Oklahoma celebrated Arbor Week with a kickoff event at the Oklahoma History Center Mar. 16.

About Oklahoma Forestry Services

Oklahoma Forestry Services, a division of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, is committed to conserving, enhancing and protecting Oklahoma's 12.5 million acres of forests and woodlands. Since 1925, Oklahoma Forestry Services has worked with individuals and communities throughout the state to create resilient landscapes, fire-adaptive communities and provide wildfire response. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, the division also has regional offices in Goldsby, Broken Bow, Wilburton and Tahlequah. For more information, visit <http://www.forestry.ok.gov>.