

# **OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD, AND FORESTRY**

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

**PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Northeastern State University recognized at Arbor Week celebration**

Oklahoma Forestry Services and the Oklahoma Urban and Community Forestry Council recognized Northeastern State 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.

Northeastern State University has been a Tree Campus USA for six years. To earn this honor, students and staff reviewed NSU's Tree Care Plan goals and targets and agreed to continue with the plan and make sure all campuses are working toward the goal of tree maintenance and upkeep. The committee will keep and maintain as many trees as possible on the existing campus and any new property that is acquired. They also plan to have input in landscaping the new housing being built.

**(Quote from local person involved with program)** \_\_\_\_\_.

The Tree Campus USA program provides the framework for community forestry management across the United States. NSU 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](http://www.forestry.ok.gov) or The Arbor Day Foundation at [www.arborday.org](http://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.

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#### **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>.