

North Dakota Community Forestry

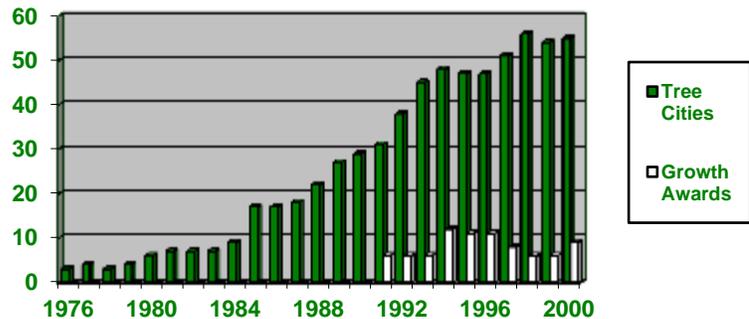
Gerri Marchus, NDFS Community Forestry Specialist

The scope and condition of a community's urban forest is one of the first impressions a community projects to its visitors. Well-maintained green spaces are an important facet of economic development and stability in North Dakota communities. Studies have shown that trees enhance local economic stability by attracting businesses and tourists. Historically perceived as a rural state, 70 percent of North Dakota's population now resides in urban areas. Trees make life more enjoyable, peaceful and relaxing for community residents.

The Community Forestry program team leads the North Dakota Forest Service agency effort to provide assistance to cities and other local government entities throughout the state. Assistance is provided for community forestry program needs assessment, planning and implementation. In addition, technical assistance regarding planting, maintenance, problem diagnosis, and pruning or removal of community trees is provided.

Annually, a statewide challenge cost-share program is implemented to provide funds for tree planting projects on publicly owned land and community forestry program development projects. Since 1991, 384 projects have been completed with \$2.9 million in grant funds. Recent program development projects have included hiring a seasonal forester to assist with planting and maintenance of newly planted trees, purchasing software to complete community tree inventories, removal of Dutch elm disease infected trees, renovation of community tree windbreaks, and hiring a consultant to complete a community forestry management plan. Additional federal programs have provided funding for special projects being completed in anticipation of the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial in 2004-2006.

North Dakota Tree City USA



North Dakota ranks 18th in the nation for number of certified Tree City USA communities. Since the inception of the program by the National Arbor Day Foundation as a bicentennial project in 1976, the program has grown from three tree cities to 55 Tree City USA communities in North Dakota. Certification in the program reflects a commitment by a community to effectively manage their public tree resources. Ongoing Tree City USA recognition makes a strong contribution to community pride.

The Carrington Research Extension Center provides a central location for horticulture and forestry-based meetings and workshops. One of the features at the center is an arboretum which includes a variety of trees and shrubs suitable for North Dakota landscapes. The plants are labeled, enabling individuals to take self-guided tours.

Anyone interested in obtaining more information regarding technical assistance, upcoming workshops, or how their community can participate in the cost-share programs or Tree City USA is encouraged to stop in or call the community forestry specialist at CREC.