

Around Town

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**By Billy Ray McKelvy**

**De Queen Mayor**

Travelers entering the City of De Queen will notice signs at the entrances to town designating De Queen as a Tree City USA, but they may not know what that designation means.

De Queen earned the Tree City title several years ago from the National Arbor Day Foundation. The program is in coordination with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters.

Tree City USA provides direction, technical assistance and public attention for cities.

As part of the Tree City program, the De Queen Parks and Recreation Department has compiled an inventory of trees in parks and other public spaces. When public trees have to be removed, another tree is planted to take its place.

The parks department recently received a grant of about 50 trees which have been planted in parks and public spaces.

As a Tree City, De Queen can qualify for an annual grant to be used for tree management. Last year the city received \$2,000 which was used to purchase tree care equipment such as limb saws and shears.

In De Queen, the Parks and Recreation Board serves as the city's tree board.

Tree Cities are also required to have an annual Arbor Day celebration and proclamation. Last year students at De Queen Elementary School had a tree planting ceremony and planted several trees in the median of the street leading to the front of the school.

The Arbor Day Foundation has a standing offer of 10 free trees for joining the foundation. You can find more information about the Tree City program at [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org).