

Around Town

For Release 12 noon Wednesday, March 28, 2007

**By Billy Ray McKelvy**

**De Queen Mayor**

Trees and green spaces enhance the quality of life in any community.

The City of De Queen was recently recertified as a Tree City USA by the National Arbor Day Foundation. As part of being a Tree City, De Queen must have a tree board, a tree care ordinance and a community forestry program. Also required is an annual Arbor Day observance and proclamation.

The Arbor Day observance was held earlier this month when a representative of the Arkansas Forestry Commission held a free tree pruning workshop, followed by a tree-planting ceremony in Herman Dierks Park.

In addition, being a Tree City qualifies the City of De Queen to receive grant funds each year to purchase trees and tree-care equipment.

In the city environment, trees preserve privacy, provide shelter for wildlife and increase property values.

To demonstrate the value of trees, compare the present condition of Herman Dierks Park to what it was in 2002 immediately after the last big ice storm. That disaster provided the opportunity to remove damaged trees in the park, some of which were old and overgrown. Now, five years after the ice storm, new trees have been planted and the park is beautiful.

If you are in need of trees for planting, the National Arbor Day Foundation will provide 10 free trees to new members who join the foundation. You can have your choice of flowering trees or oak trees and they are guaranteed to grow. You may find the Arbor Day Foundation online or call 1-888-448-7337.

This time of year you can also find a great selection of trees in local nurseries and garden centers.