



PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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IOWA URBAN TREE COUNCIL HONORS HNI CORPORATION

City of Muscatine receives 30th straight Tree City USA designation

MUSCATINE, Iowa – HNI Corporation and the City of Muscatine continue to collaborate on projects to improve the Muscatine community, and that partnership was recently recognized by the Iowa Urban Tree Council who presented HNI with the Outstanding Local Partner award at the annual awards luncheon on April 12.

“HNI appreciates the recognition and values our relationship with the City of Muscatine,” Steven Bradford, Senior Vice President-Legal at HNI Corporation, said. “We are committed to helping our communities and look forward to continuing this partnership.”

Nick Gow, Superintendent of Parks for the City of Muscatine, noted that HNI’s partnership with the City of Muscatine Parks and Recreation Department has allowed them to assist in tree plantings as well as tree and landscape maintenance projects.



Jeff Goerndt (left), State Forester, is pictured with Shelby Kresel (center), HNI Sustainability Manager, and Muscatine Mayor Brad Bark during the presentation of the Outstanding Local Partner Award by the Iowa Urban Tree Council on April 12.



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“The recognition is well-deserved because of HNI’s generous donation and volunteer efforts in the planting of 500 trees throughout our community in the spring of 2021,” Nick Gow, Superintendent of Parks for the City of Muscatine Parks & Recreation Department, said.

After a year of planning, over 100 volunteers from HNI Corporation participated in the Arbor Day 2021 Project (April 30, 2021) that resulted in 500 trees finding new homes throughout the public parks system.

“These trees helped recovery efforts by the city to replace the loss of several trees due to



severe weather and other natural causes,” Gow said in his nomination letter. “Trees were lost within the community due to flooding, tornadoes, derecho, Dutch Elm disease, and Emerald Ash Borer. Replacing these trees provided beauty to local parks as well as a variety of specimens for pollinators and local wildlife.”

“The mission of the Iowa Urban Tree Council is to guide, lead, and assist public officials, professionals, volunteers, and organizations with implementing urban forestry solutions,”

Clayton Ender, president of the Iowa Urban Tree Council, said in announcing the HNI award.

“Your nomination recounts accomplishments and commitments that resonate with our mission.

We greatly value your efforts to preserve, protect, expand, and improve your community’s urban forest resources.”

MUSCATINE RECEIVES TREE CITY USA RECOGNITION



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The City of Muscatine was recently honored with the 2021 Tree City USA Award at the 31st Annual Community Forestry Awards Luncheon April 12 at the FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny. The award was presented by the Arbor Day Foundation and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.



This is the 30th straight year that the City of Muscatine, through the efforts of the Parks and Recreation Department staff, has received the Tree City USA designation.

“The Tree City USA award is a symbol for communities who have made a commitment to the management of public trees,” Jeff Goerndt, Iowa State Forester, said. “The City of Muscatine has provided an outstanding example for other Iowa communities by enhancing our forest resources and demonstrating the great value of trees in providing multiple benefits for future generations.”

Muscatine was one of 74 Iowa communities to qualify for Tree City USA status.

Here are just a few of the many advantages that a thriving urban forest offers a community:

- Trees help absorb the sounds of traffic in urban areas by 40 percent.
- Neighborhoods with trees are seven to nine degrees cooler than those without.
- Trees reduce energy costs up to 25 percent by shading buildings and protecting them from winter winds.
- Homes with trees have higher property values.
- Green space plays a major role in improving mental and physical health.
- Planting and maintaining trees absorb carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, mitigating the effects of climate change.



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MUSCATINE RECEIVES ALLIANT ENERGY BRANCHING OUT GRANT

Alliant Energy has announced that more than 30 Iowa communities are receiving tree planting aid through the company's **Community Tree program**, part of their One Million Trees initiative.



Alliant Energy's partnership with Trees Forever, also known as "**Branching Out**", will help communities develop, select and plant a "diverse mix of trees." The funds will help communities plant trees to increase energy efficiency and replace those destroyed by the 2020 derecho or the emerald ash borer.

Muscatine and West Liberty are among the 33 recipients in 2022. The City of Muscatine will receive a \$5,000 grant from Alliant Energy for street tree planting in right-of-way. Muscatine used a \$5,000 grant in 2021 to replace trees lost during a sewer project over the past several years.

"Alliant Energy's commitment to supporting communities we serve includes improving the natural environment for future generations," Terry Kouba, president of Alliant Energy's Iowa energy company, said in a news release. "Last year, we announced our One Million Trees initiative to donate and help plant more than one million trees – representing one tree for each of our utility customers – by the end of 2030. The communities announced today will benefit from our goal and increase their own energy efficiency and tree restoration goals."

Each community was eligible to apply for grants up to \$5,000 to fund new trees that will save energy and improve the environment. In total, \$120,000 in tree grants are being awarded.

In addition, communities also receive tree-planning support from Trees Forever. The organization will connect communities with tree experts, who will help select the best species for their area and create a care and maintenance plan to make sure the new trees have long and healthy lives.



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“Our partnership with Alliant Energy has persevered for years due to the strong alignment of our values,” Kiley Miller, President and CEO of Trees Forever, said in a news release. “We are proud to work together to help communities and local volunteers plant trees through Alliant Energy’s Community Tree program, part of their One Million Trees initiative. These trees will clean our air, water and soil, while improving our health and providing beauty in all seasons.”

Alliant Energy’s partnership with Trees Forever dates to 1990. Together, they have awarded over \$7.7 million dollars in grants and planted more than 1.1 million trees, according to a news release.

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