

# 2008 Accomplishment Report – Illinois

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## Introduction

Illinois' Statewide Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) program is a part of a \$4.7 billion green industry in Illinois. Tree City USA communities alone spend \$82.4 million on tree planting and tree care in the 188 participating communities. Illinois UCF Tree City USA (TCU) efforts alone serve about 7.5 million people, or more than 67% of Illinois urban and community residents. The purpose of Illinois' UCF program is to assist communities and other units of local government in the development or expansion of local UCF programs. This program serves to increase the awareness of the important role of the urban forest in providing 87.8% of Illinois citizens with shade, protection from winter winds or summer heat, protection from air and noise pollution, and reduction of stormwater infiltration rates. Through Illinois' program, sound tree care and UCF management practices are encouraged so that Illinois citizens can live in a healthy urban forest that provides a physically, socially, and psychologically safer community environment. Illinois' UCF program focuses on components that are discussed below.

## Key Accomplishments

### Tree City USA

TCU is administered through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Springfield headquarters in cooperation with the National Arbor Day Foundation. This program provides technical assistance, education opportunities, and networking information, and is a requirement for eligibility in the Trees Count! Program. In Federal FY 08, 188 municipalities participated in the TCU program making Illinois second in the Nation for the number of TCU communities. A total of 49 TCU municipalities also received the Growth Award, making Illinois first in the Nation for the number of Growth Awards. One TCU conference was held in Springfield during Federal FY 08.

### Technical and Volunteer Services for Urban and Community Forestry Outreach

Three programs were in place to provide technical assistance and volunteer outreach: Central/Southern Illinois Service contract, Northeastern Illinois Trees Count!, and NE/Southern Central Illinois Trees Count! (see separate information below). Additionally, technical advice and information are provided through the IDNR UCF Web site, the IDNR Clearinghouse, the Springfield Urban Forestry Administrator's office, Tree City USA Newsbits electronic newsletter, IDNR field offices, and through annual partnerships/contractual services.

The service contract serves the central and southern part of the State. Through this technical/volunteer assistance service contract, 96 municipalities were contacted and provided with technical assistance and education. With the targeted county-level outreach a total of 17 additional southern and central Illinois communities were offered technical assistance. Communities in central and southern Illinois often need

more technical assistance than those communities in the northeastern part of Illinois; they lack professional assistance unless provided through the State. Great impacts on basic UCF program development and delivery are made in this region. Outreach often includes TCU designation, tree ordinance development, employee tree care training, and emerald ash borer (EAB) and other insect and disease outreach. Some established communities in the metro east area are focused on construction damage to trees and tree preservation.

### **Trees Count!**

(Tree Inventory and Urban Forestry Management Plan Outreach Initiative)

IDNR has two service contracts for conducting inventory and management plans for TCU communities. Initially, the program served communities with fewer than 5,000 residents. Because of the tremendous success of this program, the population limit has been raised to 15,000. Communities are given a free service and must, in turn, document the equivalent of the value of that service for an in-kind match. Communities are encouraged to implement a recommendation from the management plan as a part of their in-kind match (for example, remove a high-risk tree or plant a tree in a designated planting site). Two Trees Count! Program service contracts accommodate the Northeastern region and the NW/Central/Southern region of Illinois. In northern Illinois, TCU municipalities contracted for the tree inventory and management plan service were Berkeley, Dakota, Forrest, Forreston, Lakewood, Lanark, North Barrington, Stockton, and Trout Valley. In NW/Central/Southern Illinois, these municipalities received an inventory and management plan: Mount Carroll, Petersburg, and St. Elmo. This program helps move communities from developing to managing community status.

### **Inner City Outreach**

Funds were used to target low-income and minority areas for vest pocket park development and technical education for minority groups. Several projects were accomplished in this final year of inner city funding. Technical assistance and educational training were provided for the city of Peoria, Illinois Arborist Association Conference Hispanic Training, and Hispanic EAB and tree care training in Cook County. Vest pocket park/park development and tree planting training took place for the Tri-County Urban League, Peoria Citizens Committee for Economic Development, Old Towne Historic District, Western Springs Greenway Association, and Rockford Park District.

### **Significant Projects**

Inner-city initiatives that focused on EAB—ash tree removal and replacements in inner-city areas—were accomplished in Country Club Hills and Oak Lawn CDBG areas. These projects set an example of meeting multiple goals.

See the CARS Report for additional numbers.