



SACRAMENTO & NEW JERSEY TREE FOUNDATIONS RECEIVE NATIONAL AWARD FOR COMMUNITY TREE PROGRAMS, MORE THAN \$200,000 GRANTED TO WINNERS

*The U.S. Conference of Mayors and The Home Depot Foundation
Announce Winners of Annual Awards of Excellence for Community Trees Program*

MIAMI, June 20, 2008 – The U.S. Conference of Mayors® and The Home Depot® Foundation today announced Sacramento Tree Foundation and New Jersey Tree Foundation as winners of the third annual *Awards of Excellence for Community Trees* at The Conference of Mayors 76th Annual Meeting in Miami. The grant awards program was created to showcase the success and benefits of public/private partnerships in developing healthy communities through the strategic use of trees.

The City of Sacramento, Calif. led by Mayor Heather Fargo and Sacramento Tree Foundation won first place and \$75,000 in the *Large City Category* for its Greenprint Initiative, a regional partnership between government agencies, nonprofit organizations and businesses to increase investment in urban tree planting, urban forest management and community education. This initiative is a critical component to the region's sustainability and livability goals. Elected officials throughout the Sacramento region have participated in the initiative and have shared best practices, developed community partnerships and committed to planting five million new trees.

The City of Camden, N.J. under the leadership of Mayor Gwendolyn Faison and New Jersey Tree Foundation won first place and \$75,000 in the *Small City Category* for its Urban Airshed Reforestation Program. Developed in 2002 with \$1 million from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the community-based tree planting initiative has established 77 partnerships between community groups; planted more than 2,500 trees; engaged more than 4,600 volunteers; and created an environment where residents are unified and motivated to improve their neighborhoods with trees.

"As our nation focuses more and more on environmental preservation, the health and economic benefits of trees become increasingly evident," said Douglas H. Palmer, president of The U.S. Conference of Mayors and mayor of Trenton, N.J. "We are grateful to The Home Depot Foundation for its commitment to helping raise awareness about the importance of city trees and rewarding communities that leverage the social, economic and environmental benefits of their urban forests."

Both The Home Depot Foundation and The Conference of Mayors understand the pivotal role trees play in improving quality of life. This program encourages nonprofit partners and government officials to recognize and utilize green infrastructure in cities across the country.

"Now in the third year of the program, we have seen a definitive shift in the way mayors and city governments view urban forestry. More and more we're seeing cities valuing their trees as a part of their infrastructure, just like sidewalks and sewers, and recognizing the return they receive on their investment in trees," said Kelly Caffarelli, president of The Home Depot Foundation. "The programs being recognized are stellar examples of the sustainable, green communities that can be achieved through strong partnerships between city governments and nonprofit organizations."

From nearly 100 applicants, 10 award submissions were selected as finalists and reviewed and debated by an independent advisory committee comprised of experts in the fields of urban forestry, environmental science and sustainable community development. Committee members included representatives from the USDA Forest Service, National Arbor Day Foundation® and Alliance for Community Trees®, among others.

In addition to the winners, five cities and their nonprofit partners were presented with runner-up and honorable mention awards. In total, The Home Depot Foundation is awarding more than \$210,000 to support urban forestry initiatives across the country. While both the city and the nonprofit partner were recognized, the grants were awarded to the nonprofit partner to be used at their discretion to further the goal of promoting healthy, more stable communities through the strategic use and management of trees in these urban areas.

Award Recipients:

Large City Category (population 100,000 or more)

- **Winner (\$75,000)** – City of Sacramento, Calif. and Sacramento Tree Foundation
- **Runner-up (\$25,000)** – City of Atlanta and Trees Atlanta
- **Second Runner-up (\$5,000)** – City of Seattle and Cascade Land Conservancy
- **Outstanding Achievement (\$2,500)** – City of Milwaukee and Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful

Small City Category (population 100,000 or less)

- **Winner (\$75,000)** – City of Camden, N.J. and New Jersey Tree Foundation
- **Runner-up (\$25,000)** – City of Carmel, Ind. and Citizens For Greenspace
- **Outstanding Achievement (\$2,500)** – City of Waverly, Iowa and Trees Forever

The overarching goals of the *Awards of Excellence* program is not only to celebrate the achievements of local organizations, but also to provide opportunities for The Home Depot Foundation's nonprofit partners – both new and existing – to share their experiences, key learnings, challenges and best practices. For more information and to view case studies of past award recipients, visit www.homedepotfoundation.org/award_winners.html.

Information about the *Awards of Excellence for Community Trees and Urban Forestry* application process for 2008 will be available in November at www.homedepotfoundation.org.

About The Home Depot Foundation

The Home Depot Foundation was created in 2002 to further the community building goals of The Home Depot. The Home Depot Foundation is dedicated to building homes for working families that are healthy to live in and affordable to own. To make homes healthy and affordable, the Foundation encourages developers to incorporate responsible design and use durable and quality materials to ensure that homes are more energy and water efficient, have good indoor air quality, and provide a safe and healthy space to live. Since its formation, The Home Depot Foundation has granted \$70 million to nonprofit organizations and supported the development of more than 50,000 affordable, healthy homes. For more information, visit www.homedepotfoundation.org.

About U.S. Conference of Mayors

The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,139 such cities in the country today, each represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor.

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For more information, contact:

Elena Temple
U.S. Conference of Mayors
202-861-6719
etemple@usmayors.org

Caroline Counihan
The Home Depot Foundation
770-384-2944
caroline_counihan@homedepot.com

Mandy Hunsicker
Manning Selvage & Lee for The Home Depot Foundation
404-870-6815
mandy.hunsicker@mslpr.com