

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Arbor Day events planned

COLUMBIA, MO (April 21, 2005) -- The city of Columbia will hold its eighth annual Arbor Day program on April 29. This year's celebration will start at about 8:20 a.m. at Gentry Middle School.

Seventh grade students at Gentry have been invited to participate in the celebration. Festivities will begin with a welcome and a proclamation read by Steve Saitta, park development superintendent for Columbia's Parks and Recreation Department.

Following the proclamation reading, students will help plant several trees at the school, then will rotate through four educational stations that promote proper tree planting and care. The stations will focus on tree benefits, the proper place to plant a tree, tree trimming equipment and tree identification.

The Arbor Day celebration at Gentry Middle School is a collaboration among the city's Parks and Recreation Department, Water and Light Department and the Missouri Department of Conservation.

In addition to the ceremony at Gentry Middle School, the city's Parks and Recreation forestry staff, Volunteer Services and volunteer Treekeepers will give away more than 1,000 tree seedlings. The Arbor Day tree giveaway will be held at the ARC on April 30. The giveaway will start at 8 a.m. until the trees are gone. Forestry staff and Treekeepers will be available to answer any questions about trees.

Columbia holds Arbor Day events each year as a Tree City USA, a recognition bestowed by the National Arbor Day Foundation to honor the city's commitment to a forestry program. Columbia has met all four standards to be a Tree City USA: a tree board or department, a tree care ordinance, a comprehensive community forestry program and an Arbor Day observance.