



**Public Information Office**  
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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 20, 2012

**SUBJECT:** Arbor Day Celebration and tree giveaway set for Friday, April 27

**CONTACT:** Lynn Onstot, Public Information Officer, [417-624-0820, ext. 204](tel:417-624-0820); [417-438-2287](tel:417-438-2287)

Officials from the City of Joplin, Empire District Electric Company, and the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) invite the public to join them in recognizing Friday, April 27 as Arbor Day in Joplin. The event will recognize the benefits trees provide our community with a tree planting and short program at 11 a.m. at Parr Hill Park, located at 18<sup>th</sup> and Kansas.

Joplin Mayor Melodee Colbert-Kean will present a Proclamation naming April 27, 2012 as Arbor Day for the City of Joplin. Immediately following the program, Empire foresters will give complimentary trees to residents. These foresters, along with representatives of the MDC and the City's Tree Advisory Board, will be on hand to provide information about the importance of planting the right tree in the right place.

A variety of trees specifically selected to aid in reforestation efforts in Joplin and Duquesne will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Trees will be given away immediately following the program through 1 p.m. Empire foresters will also offer trees to Duquesne customers from 3 – 5 p.m., Friday, April 27, 2012, at Duquesne City Hall, 1501 S. Duquesne Road.

The event will also celebrate Joplin's status as a Tree City USA and Empire's third year as a Tree Line USA utility, as recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation. To become a Tree City USA, a city must initiate standards that address management and care of public trees, commit to a community forestry program, and participate in an event to provide education about proper tree care. To receive the Tree Line USA designation, a utility must follow quality tree care standards, provide annual worker training, and participate in tree planting, public education and tree-based energy conservation efforts.

Thousands of trees in the City were lost due to the May 22, 2011 tornado, with losses totaling over 200 trees in Cunningham and Parr Hill Parks alone. Tree donations have allowed the City to start the process of planting replacement trees.

For more information about the City's Tree City USA program, contact the Parks and Recreation Department at [417-624-6937](tel:417-624-6937). For information about Empire's vegetation management program and utility arboretum projects, go to [www.empiredistrict.com/trees](http://www.empiredistrict.com/trees).

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