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Village Earns 18th Consecutive Tree City U.S.A. Award

The Village of Oak Park has been named a Tree City U.S.A. for the 18th consecutive year and received its seventh Growth Award, special recognition given to only a few hundred select communities in the nation for innovative initiatives to protect and nurture trees.

“We were very pleased to learn that the Village had, once again, earned these prestigious honors,” said Village President Joanne E. Trapani. “No community takes the care of its trees more seriously than does Oak Park and these awards attest to the success of our efforts.

“Tree care in the Village has continued to improve over the past several years, thanks to the training and experience of the arborists on our professional Forestry staff. This recognition from the their peers in the forestry profession is well deserved. For we residents, the rewards of their hard work are about to become evident as spring nears.”

The National Arbor Day Foundation presented the awards in recognition of the Village's on-going dedication and professionalism in preserving the community's urban forest of more than 20,000 trees. Last year, only about 500 Tree Cities earned the Growth Award, placing the Village among what the National Arbor Day Foundation considers the nation's best managed and executed professional forestry programs.

Said Joe Euclide, director of the Public Works Department which manages the Village's forestry programs, “The Village was recognized for its planning and management tools, including the proper maintenance and care of parkway trees, increased community awareness through neighborhood meetings and a new program to protect trees during construction projects.”

Euclide said the Growth Award was especially significant because it is only given for a specific program initiative, rather than the overall tree care. This year's Growth Award was for the Village's program to set up fences around parkway trees in advance of construction work.

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Tree City Award
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Trustee Barbara Ebner, the Village Board's liaison to the Forestry Commission, praised the role of commission volunteers who give up their free time to help oversee the Village's comprehensive tree care program.

"The past year was a somewhat difficult one for Commission members and Forestry staff," she said. "Their perseverance and ability to separate emotions from facts were important to ensuring the Village's continued ability to provide the community with one of the best urban forestry care programs in the region."

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