

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: David Forsell, 223-5180
Justin Ohlemiller, 327-3690.

Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Inc.'s NeighborWoods Program To Plant 100,000 Trees

\$14 Million, 10-Year Effort Targets Entire County, and Where Trees are Needed Most

April 28, 2006 (Indianapolis, IN)—On Friday, April 28, 2006, Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson joined Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Inc. (KIB) to announce a major initiative to plant 100,000 trees in Indianapolis over the next ten years. The announcement and ceremonial tree planting took place on the 1200 block of East Ohio Street at its intersection with Highland Avenue.

David Forsell, President of Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Inc. said that trees do far more for the community than simply making it prettier.

“Remarkable national research clearly demonstrates that trees improve air and water quality; increase neighborhood property values; encourage economic and retail vitality; and likely create neighborhood environments that reduce domestic violence, property crime and violent crime. We want to apply that research locally, and measure the difference intensive community tree planting will make throughout Marion County.”

Through a grant from the Efroymsen Fund of the Central Indiana Community Foundation, KIB worked closely with IUPUI over the past year to map social and environmental stressors on Center Township, which in 2003 had the least tree cover of any township in Marion County, according to data provided by Indy Parks. Researchers using Geographic Information Systems mapped a variety of indicators of socioeconomic and environmental challenges, including higher than average crime rates, ambient air temperatures, and impervious surfaces; and lower than average income and tree cover.

The result is a vivid picture of areas within Center Township that have the most immediate need for trees.

Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Inc. will focus on “hot spots” within Center Township for intensive community tree planting over the next ten years, as neighborhood capacity and funding will allow. Every plantable space approved by government and property owners will be targeted for tree planting to meet a 25% tree cover goal in each “hot spot.” Hot spots’ tree cover ranges from 9-17%. American Forests, Inc., our nation’s oldest conservation organization, suggests tree canopy goals of 25% for urban residential areas. KIB will use computer modeling to measure the environmental benefits of trees that are planted in these neighborhoods, and will work with public safety experts and researchers over time to measure the relationship between the greening of neighborhoods, volunteer engagement and localized crime statistics.

More broadly, understanding the value trees provide (among them improving property values and business climates), KIB will promote and facilitate extensive community tree planting throughout Marion County through volunteer projects, tree distribution days, wholesale/retail partnerships, and other avenues.

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Neighborhoods and property owners will be required to pledge care for newly planted trees. Those efforts will be supplemented by KIB's Youth Corps and Indy TreeKeepers programs.

Mayor Peterson said that NeighborWoods will be transformative for Indianapolis, and will be a useful tool towards comprehensive community development and improvement.

“By focusing county-wide, KIB will engage our entire community, from neighborhoods to businesses to property managers in getting trees planted. By focusing on neighborhoods with significant challenges to their environment, their safety and quality of life, trees will be a tool to rally neighbors, grow grass-roots leadership and investment, and we expect, enhance a culture of ownership in Indy's great neighborhoods.”

As lead corporate supporters, Indianapolis Power & Light Company and Veolia Water Indianapolis have both pledged multi-year charitable commitments totaling \$400,000. The total cost for NeighborWoods is estimated to be \$14 million.

Forsell is confident NeighborWoods will succeed.

“We face a huge gap between our generous lead gifts and what NeighborWoods will require, but just ten years ago, KIB wasn't in the tree planting business. With support from Lilly Endowment, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Efroymsen Fund, IPL, the City of Indianapolis and others, we've gotten this far. With new partners on the horizon, such as the Alliance for Community Trees, Plant A Million and Senator Lugar's office, and others of which today we're unaware, there is no reason to believe we can't take this next important step, and we must. The return on the investment of planting 100,000 trees will pay off for generations.”

The news conference was held in the Holy Cross Neighborhood at the intersection of East Ohio Street and Highland Avenue. Holy Cross is a neighborhood in one of the hot spots identified by IUPUI research.

Mayor Peterson, Forsell, and representatives from IPL and Veolia Water planted NeighborWoods' first tree with students from IPS School 14 immediately following public comments.

For more information about NeighborWoods, contact KIB at 264-7555, or by visiting www.kibi.org.

For additional information regarding the April 28 news conference, contact David Forsell, Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Inc. at (317) 223-5180 or Justin Ohlemiller, Mayor's Office, at 327-3690.

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