Tree giveaway planned for Midland Valley neighborhood

By Cathy Spaulding
Phoenix Staff Writer

A little section of Muskogee will get a lot greener starting Saturday when residents of the Midland Valley neighborhood will pick up trees to plant by their homes.

About 50 trees are to be given away Saturday to neighborhood residents. The giveaway is sponsored by the City of Muskogee Tree Board as part of National NeighborWoods Month.

NeighborWoods Month is sponsored by the Alliance of Community Trees, a group of organizations dedicated to improving the appearance and livability of cities. Saturday also marks Make A Difference Day, an annual day of helping the community, sponsored by USA Weekend.

The city gave away more than 557 trees to Muskogee residents last Saturday in an effort to help maintain its status as Tree City USA.

“Hopefully Midland Valley will be the first of many neighborhoods where people will plant trees,” said Phil Sapienza of the Muskogee Parks and Recreation Forestry Division.

Brenda Burchett, vice president of the Robison Park Community Association, said she and Tree Board representatives walked through the neighborhood to make residents aware of the neighborhood giveaway. She said the area is roughly bordered by Hancock Road, Patterson Street, Augusta Avenue and Gulick Road.

“Everyone we talked to is just really eager,” she said. “The neighborhood is starting to clean up and look good.”

Burchett said she has lived in the neighborhood for 20 years in a 100-year-old house where her grandmother used to live. She praised the neighborhood’s friendliness and diversity.

“You can just be what you want to be,” she said.

“If you want to be neat and tidy, you can. If you want to go out in sloppy clothes, you can. And we’re always there to help you. It is a real giving neighborhood.”

Sapienza said residents will have a variety of trees to choose from, but they must come early to take advantage of the selection.

“A lot of people are wanting maple, redbuds, crepe myrtles and Chinese Pistache,” he said. “Understandably, not everyone is going to get what they want.”

Burchet said she hopes to plant a crepe myrtle on her property.

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