**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 2016**

**Contact: Jessica Kelling**

**Nebraska Forest Service**

**402-472-0220**

**jkelling2@unl.edu**

**Statewide Planting Efforts Recognized**

**LINCOLN, Neb.—**Individuals and organizations from around the state were recognized for tree-planting efforts at the Nebraska State Capitol on April 5. Community forestry awards were given by the Nebraska Forest Service, with first lady Susanne Shore participating in the event.

Jessica Kelling, coordinator for the ReTree Nebraska Initiative, said, “It’s amazing how much difference these individuals and organizations have made in their local communities by planting and caring for trees and getting others involved.” The following individuals and organizations, listed below by hometown, received community forestry awards:

**BASSETT**: Carolyn Hall received the **Volunteer Award** for long-time service on the Bassett Tree Board and on the Nebraska Community Forestry Council, which oversees statewide outreach.

**BEATRICE:** Exmark Manufacturing Co., Inc. was honored with the **Business Award** for planting and landscaping projectsat Homestead National Monument of America, several Beatrice parks, Habitat for Humanity houses in Beatrice and Wymore and a local school district.

**COZAD:**  The City of Cozad received the Outstanding **Tree Care Award** for recent efforts to replant street trees, create future canopy and educating its citizens about tree planting and care.

**DAVID CITY:** The **Youth Award** went to Rising Star 4-H Club of Butler County. Three of its members have won gold medals for tree identification at the Nebraska State 4-H Tree Identification Contest in recent years, with many other members receiving honors that have resulted in Butler County 4-H being named a championship for seven consecutive years. An important result of these efforts is that members apply that knowledge to community service projects for signage and education in local landscapes.

**GRETNA:** The recipient of the **For Future Generations Award** was Gretna Arbor Societyfor tree training, education and planting programs. They have been involved with many local efforts, including tree-planting at the Gretna City Park undertaken by local scouts, Master Gardeners, Gretna Arbor Society members and other residents. For the last 10 years, the Gretna Arbor Society has brought in statewide tree and horticulture experts to present educational sessions during the Annual Gretna Tree Talk; and a fall tree giveaway and planting event trains members of the community in the proper selection, planting and care of trees.

**MCCOOK:** Bruce and Debbie Hoffman received the **Dave Mooter Legacy Award.** As owners and operators of Common Scents greenhouse, they host many educational events, including Burr Oak Canyon Symposiums, Western Field Days and Mid-Plains Tree School. These events have brought in international experts like Guy Sternberg, author of *Native Trees for North American Landscapes*. They have also worked to make selections (progreny???) of ‘Relict’ bur oak, a promising seed source adapted to regions with very low rainfall, available to the general public.

**MINDEN:** The **Educator Award** went to Ted Griess, UNL Extension Assistant for Buffalo County. Griess writes a weekly newspaper column in the *Kearney Hub* on topics like tree selection, planting and maintenance. He is mayor and city forester in Minden and a member of the Kearney County Horticulture Society and Nebraska Master Gardeners.

**NORFOLK**: *Nebraska Life Magazine* received the **Media Award.** Since its first issue 20 years ago that included an article on Nebraska’s Pine Ridge, *Nebraska Life Magazine* has repeatedly made trees part of its editorial focus. Other features have included: Fontenelle Forest, famous trees in the state, Nebraska City’s hazelnut project and Arbor Day Farm, Nebraska National Forest and tree loss to Panhandle wildfires.

**OMAHA**: Arbor Aesthetics was given the **Green Industry Award** for educating customers about ethical tree care and cultivating a love and appreciation for trees in the Omaha community. Arbor Aesthetics supports and sponsors many tree-related events: Nebraska Statewide Arboretum’s Omaha Earth Day Tree Climb; the “Gift of Beautiful Trees” charity program giving Omaha families free and much-needed tree trimming and removal services at no cost and the Nebraska Arborists Association Summer Field Day and Winter Conference.

**PLAINVIEW:** Donna Christiansen received the **Volunteer Award** for long service on the Nebraska Community Forestry Council and on the Plainview Tree Board. Christiansen also serves as director of the Plainview Pubic Library.

**VALPARAISO**: The village of Valparaiso was honored with the **Community Enhancement Award** for planting many native trees in 2015 in anticipation of loss to Emerald Ash Borer, with the goal of planting at least 10 new trees every year. In previous years, they planted 150 trees in parks, roadsides and ball fields thanks to volunteer efforts by individuals and local organizations.

The Nebraska Forest Service, an affiliate of the University of Nebraska, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR), works to enrich lives by protecting, restoring and utilizing Nebraska’s tree and forest resources. More at nfs.unl.edu.

\*\*\*

Contact: Jessica Kelling, Nebraska Forest Service, 402-472-0220, jkelling2@unl.edu