

## **The Benefits of Being a Tree City USA**

Every community, regardless of size, benefits in different ways from being a Tree City USA. Reports of these benefits have reached The National Arbor Day Foundation through the years and are summarized below in six general categories:

### **Framework for Action**

Meeting the four standards for becoming a Tree City USA provides initial direction for an urban or community forestry program. Like the first rungs on a ladder, the standards help get a community started toward annual, systematic management of its tree resources.

### **Education**

Education begins with discussion of the standards and getting organized to apply for Tree City USA status. It continues as the desire for Tree City USA recognition leads to contacts with the state forester's staff. In turn, this can set in motion aid from a variety of professionals in the form of technical advice, literature, films, and other assistance.

### **Public Image**

A community's public image is a very real phenomenon and important in many ways. Being a Tree City USA helps present the kind of image that most citizens want to have for the place they live or conduct business. The Tree City USA signs at community entrances tell visitors that here is a community that cares about its environment. It is also an indication to prospective businesses that the quality of life may be better here. It has even been known to be a factor in where meetings or conferences have been held. This reason alone caused a motel owner to start action for his community to join the network!

### **Citizen Pride**

Pride is sometimes a less tangible benefit. Gaining and retaining Tree City USA recognition is an award to the tree workers, managers, volunteers, tree board members and others who work on behalf of better care of a community's trees. Non-involved citizens, too, often share a sense of pride that theirs is a Tree City USA. This may translate to better care of trees on private property or a willingness to volunteer in the future.

### **Financial Assistance**

Preference is sometimes given to Tree City USA communities over other communities when allocations of grant money are made for trees or forestry

programs. The reason is that there are invariably more requests than available funds when grants are available through state or federal agencies. If requests are equally worthy, some officials tend to have more confidence in communities that have demonstrated the foresight of becoming a Tree City USA.

## **Publicity**

Presentation of the Tree City USA award and the celebration of Arbor Day offer excellent publicity opportunities. This results not only in satisfaction for the individuals involved and their families, but also provides one more way to reach large numbers of people with information about tree care. As one forester put it, "This is advertising that money can't buy— and it is free!"