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GOLDEN RESIDENTS SHAPING THE CITY'S "URBAN FOREST"

(Denver, Colorado) – Golden residents are helping to shape the future of the city's "urban forest" through surveys now in progress as part of the City of Golden Tree Project, a scientifically-based approach to increasing environmental benefits from trees growing within city limits.

"The goal of the Golden Tree Project is to determine how trees can contribute to enhanced energy and water conservation and improved air quality throughout the City and other urban areas of Colorado's Front Range," said Golden City Forester Dave High. "Longer term, it will enable better decisions by developers, urban planners and homeowners about using trees to deliver the most benefit for the least cost."

Surveying Golden residents' viewpoints about trees is a vital element of the project. The survey assesses residents' opinions on tree planting and care as a basis for recommendations to the Golden City Council on improving stewardship of the urban forest.

Citizen input is being sought through two means. Volunteers are canvassing residents at the City's Music and Movies in the Park events each Friday evening through August 31. Event dates and times are posted at http://www.ci.golden.co.us/Calendar.asp?View=EVENT&EventID=177.

Residents can also complete the Tree Project Social Issues Survey online at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=dmQSRvlmGUxas4ocTFtbdA_3d_3d

All survey participants will receive a free packet of wildflower seeds and have a chance to win a free five-gallon tree donated by Hardy Boy Plants and Country Fair WestWoods Garden Center.

The Tree Project is being conducted by the Institute for Environmental Solutions (IES) through a unique partnership with the City of Golden.

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In addition to resident surveys, the Tree Project includes a computer modeling analysis to identify specific energy savings from trees. IES is also tackling a key question: Do trees help conserve water or do trees increase water consumption? IES team members are making measurements in Golden throughout the summer to help answer this important question.

Volunteers, staff members, and city foresters from Golden, Westminster, Broomfield, and Longmont completed tree and ground cover measurements on over 100 plots in Golden in June. The study is applying i-Tree, a software program developed by the U.S. Forest Service's Center for Urban Forest Research, to assess costs and benefits of the City's trees. I-Tree quantifies carbon dioxide storage in trees (carbon sequestration), air pollution reduction, stormwater runoff control, and energy savings.

Identifying the costs, benefits, and tradeoffs of the urban forest are crucial to optimizing the contribution trees can have on improving the environment. But environmental improvement from trees is only possible when they are properly planted and maintained. Survey findings will help identify how to remove obstacles to proper tree planting and maintenance and ways to educate residents about how trees can reduce air pollution and energy bills, and help mitigate global warming.

More information about the Golden Tree Project and IES is available by visiting www.InstituteforEnvironmentalSolutions.org/TreeProject.html

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