



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Delaware Center for Horticulture completes 320-tree project in Seaford

The year-long effort is the non-profit's first large Sussex County installation

SEAFORD, DEL. – The Delaware Center for Horticulture has completed an 11-site tree project begun in June 2010 in Seaford, Del.

The multi-location planting serves environmental, social and historical purposes. In partnership with the City of Seaford, Seaford Parks Department, the Seaford Historical Society, the Seaford School District, and the Seaford Library and Cultural Center, more than 300 10-12 foot trees were installed in mixed industrial and residential areas that see heavy recreational usage and poor tree canopy coverage.

Funding was provided by the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control's (DNREC) Community Environmental Project Fund (CEPF).

"Trees are especially important in urban areas," said DNREC project sponsor and Division of Air Quality Director Ali Mirzakhali. "From improving air quality to preventing erosion, improving water quality and reducing temperatures in the urban core to reduce energy consumption, trees are a valuable long term investment." Trees improve air quality by reducing greenhouse gases and absorbing airborne particulate matter, he added.

Delaware Center for Horticulture Executive Director Pam Sapko praised the partnership saying that it helps the Wilmington based nonprofit to continue expanding its urban forestry objectives statewide.

Seaford's tree canopy coverage is 19.3 percent, well below the 40 percent tree cover recommended by American Forests, and below the eastern cities average of 23 percent, making it a prime target for TheDCH's urban tree planting efforts.

The planting locations include:

Governor Ross Mansion
Hooper's Landing Golf Course
Nylon Boulevard
Seaford Boat Ramp
Seaford Library and Cultural Center
Soroptomist Park

Blades Elementary
Frederick Douglass Elementary
Seaford Central Elementary
Seaford Middle
West Seaford Elementary

(more)

Many of the sites have playgrounds and are significant gathering places for families, children, community groups and organizations, and so will benefit many members of the community. Others have historical and cultural value. For example, the historically significant Gov. Ross Mansion project will one day result in a mature grove of pecans similar to what Gov. Ross planted many years ago.

In 1939, Seaford won the distinction of becoming home to the world's first Nylon plant. However, the town's air quality and natural resources have suffered from exposure to the 750-acre site's industrial air emissions, making the town eligible for DNREC CEPF awards. TheDCH received \$69,805 in CEPF funds to complete the project.

Partner organizations contributed staff time developing the scope of the project, selecting locations, digging holes and planting trees, and in many cases will provide follow up watering until the trees are established.

Seaford School District Buildings and Grounds Chief Roy Whittaker, who helped target appropriate school sites, thanked the non-profit for its involvement.

"It will be paying great dividends in a few years," Whittaker said. "Superintendent Dr. Russell Knorrz is extremely pleased with the trees and has already followed up about the watering plan, as he wants to make sure they make it through to maturity."

With regular watering the first year and as needed in dry conditions thereafter, the new trees are expected to have a 94 percent survival rate, which will contribute much to the Seaford community in years to come.

High resolution photos and captions available upon request.

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The Delaware Center for Horticulture (TheDCH) cultivates greener communities by inspiring appreciation and improvement of the environment through horticulture, education and conservation. Founded in 1977, the Center's headquarters in Wilmington include an educational demonstration garden, an art gallery, a lecture hall, and a greenhouse. TheDCH supports numerous community gardens and school gardens; organizes park improvement projects, beautifies Delaware's roadsides with native vegetation; maintains the landscaping of many urban streetscapes; leads regional community forestry projects; and provides educational programs for children, teens, and adults. For more information, visit TheDCH.org