**Dickson celebrates certification of Arboretum**

The City of Dickson recently celebrated the certification of the Arboretum located in J. Dan Buckner Park.

A grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in May to recognize the certification of the Arboretum and Community Nature Trail by the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council. Members and volunteers with the Tree Management and Beautification Committee, Mayor Don L. Weiss Jr., Dickson Parks and Recreation Department staff and board members and others gathered at the Arboretum to celebrate the certification.

“We are delighted to announce that the City of Dickson Arboretum has achieved a significant milestone by earning certification for having thirty-plus identified and named tree species,” said Warner Taylor, chairman of the city’s Tree Management and Beautification Committee. “This certification recognizes our commitment to tree conservation, education and public engagement.”

The TUFC awarded certification for the Arboretum for five years. To earn certification requires identifying and labeling at least 30 tree species from an approved tree list, creating public access to the trees, compiling a narrative detailing a governance and maintenance plan and an on-site inspection.

“Visitors can now enjoy a self-guided tour through our Arboretum, where each tree is labeled with its scientific and common name. Guided tours also are available by appointment,” Mr. Taylor told the crowd at the ribbon cutting. “Every label includes a QR code to access more information about specific trees. This achievement not only enhances the educational experience for our guests but also underscores our dedication to preserving and showcasing diverse tree species.”

The recreational and educational area of J. Dan Buckner Park now known as the City of Dickson Arboretum began in March 2001 as the Dickson Community Nature Trail and Arboretum for an outdoor classroom project sponsored by the Girl Scouts of Cumberland Valley Service Unit 072.

The girl scouts were joined by other organizations, including the Boy Scouts, the City of Dickson Tree Management and Beautification Committee, Gardening Partners of Dickson County, staff and students of Centennial Elementary School and local volunteers, according to information from Linda Al Sangar, a member of the Tree Management and Beautification Committee since 2011.

“The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service and Department of Forestry were invaluable advisors through all the stages of this project,” Ms. Al Sangar said. “Over the years, the Arboretum was improved with new trees planted, programs such as Earth Day celebrations, Arbor Day celebrations, citizen foresters, Herb Day workshops, poster contests, scholarships, expansions of the nature trail and installation of bridges.”

The Dickson Community Nature Trail and Arboretum earned its first five-year TUFC certification Oct. 26, 2004.

Located within J. Dan Buckner Park, the Dickson Parks and Recreation Department maintains the trails and pathways. The Dickson High Noon Rotary Club installed a small covered pavilion at the entrance. Restrooms and water fountains, as well as an additional covered picnic area are available across the parking lot near the entrance to the soccer fields.

“The arboretum is a destination for area school field trips and the local cross country teams use the trails for training and competition,” said Ms. Al Sangar.

The Tree Management and Beautification Committee spearheaded a commitment to returning the arboretum to certified status, clearing overgrowth, replacing trees, installing signage and planting new species.

“Everyone is invited to explore our Arboretum. Whether you’re a tree enthusiast, a student or simply looking for a peaceful retreat, there’s something for everyone to enjoy,” said Mr. Taylor. “The Dickson Tree Management and Beautification Committee wishes to express our thanks and appreciation to the City of Dickson, Dickson Parks and Recreation Department and staff, Dickson Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and Dickson County Sheriff’s Office for all their support, advice, and hard work. We are grateful for their contributions and look forward to continuing our efforts to create a thriving and sustainable arboretum for our community.”

The seven-member City of Dickson Tree Management and Beautification Committee was created by the Dickson City Council in 1996 in an effort led by the late former Councilwoman Helen Rial. Members must be residents of the City of Dickson and meet quarterly for three-year terms.

The current membership includes Mr. Taylor, Ms. Al Sangar, Cynthia Hernandez, Mike Tummins, Brian Hughett and Gayle Mitchell, with one position vacant since the passing of long-time member Joann Anderson.

“Our vision is to see increased involvement and volunteerism from the community, more educational programs and tours, and to use this space to pass on knowledge, history and a dedication to maintaining the Arboretum for future generations,” said Mr. Taylor.

To learn more about the committee or to view a list of the tree species identified at the Arboretum, visit [www.dicksontreeboard.org](http://www.dicksontreeboard.org).

**Photo**

**City Administrator David Travis is joined by members of the Tree Management and Beautification Committee and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, parks system employees and volunteers in cutting the ribbon to celebrate the certification of the Arboretum in J. Dan Buckner Park. *(photo courtesy Ray Dryden)***