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Plant More Trees!

Park Department Backs New City-Wide Program


A Guest Editorial

By ROCKWOOD BROWN, JR.
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Yesterday was Arbor Day and we are reminded of the importance of trees in our community. The charm and appeal of any city is largely measured by its trees and parks. This was recognized and put into practice many years ago in Billings as shown by the beautiful tree-lined streets in the older sections of our city.

It is disturbing to note that this heritage is not being perpetuated and many of the homes constructed within the last 10 or 15 years are barren of street trees. Aside from the obvious aesthetic benefits of trees, they also represent a sound business investment. A subdivision with trees uniformly planted along the street can be a persuasive selling point to a prospective homeowner. A shopping center or downtown business establishment, making proper use of trees and landscaping, will present the shopper with a pleasant contrast to bare concrete and asphalt.

A well-planned tree planting program will improve and stabilize property values and provide a more pleasant community environment in which to live and work. These are factors that attract new people to our city and hold those that are already here.



R. BROWN, JR.

middle 36 feet actually used for street purposes. This leaves approximately 12 feet on either side of the curb line for sidewalks and boulevards. In cases where the sidewalk is located adjacent to the curb, the city's "boulevard" usually consists of the front 6 feet of lawn. And so the City of Billings could carry out a tree planting program of its own on the publicly owned boulevard areas, as some cities do. However, this would amount to the city government performing a function which is truly the responsibility and privilege of the individual citizen. It would appear that the proper and legitimate role of the city is to formulate a plan and furnish information and guidance so that the citizens themselves may do the job.

PURSuing THIS APPROACH, the Billings Park Department intends this year to take affirmative action toward accomplishment of a city-wide street tree planting program. As the first step, a survey must be made of the boulevards, sidewalks and existing trees. Thereafter, with the cooperation of local nurserymen, the Mayor's City Beautification Committee, and other interested citizens, information should be disseminated to the public concerning recommended varieties, locations and methods of planting street trees.

The program should be undertaken on a block-by-block and neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis with local groups or individuals furnishing the necessary funds, labor and initiative. Civic pride is contagious and the beautification program of one neighborhood will prompt action in another. The visible dividends and the community

"Plant More Trees" Writes Brown in Editorial

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