

News Release

WRIGHT-HENNEPIN'S LOCAL PROGRAM HAS DONATED MORE THAN 168,000 TREE SEEDLINGS

Rockford, MN (May 24, 2010) — Over the past 13 years, Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association (WH) has donated 168,900 tree seedlings to the local area through the cooperative's Plant-A-Tree program. This spring alone, WH donated 15,000 trees to youth, schools and civic organizations throughout its electric service territory. Nearly 13,000 of those tree seedlings went directly to area youth.

Following a severe storm in 1997, which left many mature trees bowed and broken, WH took action to start growing a new generation of trees in the yards of local residents through its Plant-A-Tree program.

Educators use the program as an opportunity to teach students about the important environmental benefits of trees. The smiles of students receiving their seedlings indicate their enjoyment in learning about how a tree is planted and grown. Seedling varieties distributed included: red maple, silver maple, red oak, white pine, black hills spruce, white birch and northern pin oak.

"The kindergartener's that took home a tree thought it was 'awesome' to get one," said Barb Stoffel, kindergarten teacher at Delano Elementary. "They all promised to plant the tree and take care of it to watch it grow."

In the last 13 years, WH has donated more than 168,000 trees to the local community. While not every tree donated by WH will reach maturity, each tree that does has the ability to annually absorb 729 pounds* of carbon dioxide while releasing oxygen into the air. That means if even one-quarter of the trees that WH has donated survive to reach maturity, WH and its members will have potentially given nature the ability to take away approximately 30 million pounds of carbon dioxide each year. The average U.S.

citizen produces 23 tons of CO2 per year. This is just one way that WH is working to improve the environment.

WH is a member-owned non-profit electric utility that provides electric power to Wright County and the western part of Hennepin County. The cooperative has been a corporate citizen in this area since 1937 and currently serves more than 46,000 electric accounts. The utility started its security division in 1989 that provides local home security solutions as well as monitors alarm systems for more than 50,000 customers in 32 states and three Canadian provinces.

**Source: American Forests*

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