

News Release

WRIGHT-HENNEPIN DONATES TREE SEEDLINGS TO LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

Rockford, Minn. (June 4, 2012) — As part of an effort to help the environment, Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association has donated nearly 200,000 tree seedlings to the local area through the cooperative's Plant-A-Tree program.

In 1997, WH's electric service territory was struck by a severe storm that damaged and destroyed many mature trees. WH has since worked to offset that loss by donating trees to youth, schools and civic organizations throughout its service territory in Wright and western Hennepin counties.

Local educators often use the program as an opportunity to teach students about the important environmental benefits of trees, including preventing soil erosion, providing habitats for wildlife, replenishing oxygen supplies and filtering groundwater. Students who receive seedlings enjoy learning how to plant and care for the trees, and are excited to watch the trees grow throughout their lifetimes.

Trees were also donated to Lake Maria State Park as a part of a clean-up effort. WH rounded up more than 50 volunteers to assist with planting the new trees and doing other park maintenance in May.

While not every tree donated by WH will reach maturity, each tree that does has the ability to absorb 729 pounds* of carbon dioxide annually while releasing oxygen into the air. That means if even one-quarter of the trees that WH has donated reach maturity, WH and its members will have potentially given nature the ability to take away approximately 36.5 million pounds of carbon dioxide each year. This is just one way that WH is working to improve the environment.

A variety of trees are distributed, including white spire birch, red maple, bur oak, red pine, black hills spruce and northern pin oak. This is the 15th year WH has donated trees through the program.

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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