

Trees Tie Community Together Over Time

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Editor's note: On Saturday, April 18, Evergreen will host its 20th Earth Day is celebration. In commemoration, Earth Day organizers have designated Spalding Trees as Green Business of the Year.

Spalding Trees has been planting trees in the Evergreen area since 1988. Using a large tree spade that plants a 12,000-pound root ball, the company plants trees from 10 to 45 feet tall.

For more information, call Mary Dickhoff, Earth Day chairwoman, at 674-1918.

Evergreen is a verdant oasis largely because of its leafy and coniferous inhabitants. And while the last 50 years have seen significant development, the community has worked to preserve its great green namesakes.

In the late 90s, members of the newly formed Evergreen Chamber community relations committee set out to find a new community tree. The tree many remember that shone its lights across the lake was too big to access. Chamber chairpersons Ted Mann, Nancy Brown and Terry Hoffman all worked with then-Parks and Recreation Director Dick Wulf and Spalding Trees to find the replacement.

The quest went on for two years. One year, there were no lights shining at the lake.

News stories were written soliciting donations, but nary a tree was to be found until Mann and Wulf spotted a candidate at the site of the soon-to-be-built Buchanan Recreation Center.

Could it survive the trip to the lake? The tree towered 35 feet tall, with immense roots that literally had to be chain-sawed. It took a full day to tie the tree, treat it for transplant shock and get it ready for transport. The next day the new community tree was installed, transplanted with a 12,000-pound root ball. Four large stakes and double wires held it into the ground to hold it against the winds.

The new community tree had plenty of room for growth in front of the Lake House, but its trials were not over. Winds whipped out branches, the large roots that had been cut had to be treated in order to grow new healthy roots, and an accident when the lights were hung caused the 4-foot top to break off.

But it survived. And today, it is a healthy sister to its neighbor, the Earth Day tree, which was planted two years ago.

The 43-foot Earth Day tree, which also was saved from the chain saw, came from a yard near Highway 73. The soil it was growing in was prime, black dirt that formed a good ball; it was an

easy dig for the tree spade.

Together the pair form a beautiful entry to the Lake House and a tribute to community members from the chamber and the rec district.

Evergreen has had other residents that were visionaries in saving trees. Old-timers remember the Alf Means meadow filled with beautiful Ponderosa pine before the Albertsons was built. Tanoa Development chose to save as many trees as possible, and the bike path in the 100-year flood drainage is filled with trees from that meadow.

Today, once again, the Evergreen Chamber, whose leadership committee voted to put in a new community tree by the sign near El Rancho, will have a part in planting a community tree. With help from the Evergreen Rotary and CDOT, a new tree will replace one killed when magnesium chloride, a road de-icer, seeped into its root structure. The new tree will be planted high on the hill behind the sign, away from the dangers of the de-icer. Water will be provided through a tank and a drip irrigation system.

And perhaps, on holidays, the phantom decorator (you know who you are) will provide Evergreen commuters a treat from a bygone era