Branching Out 2017 Annual Report

Alliant Energy and Trees Forever's Branching Out partnership empowers community leaders and volunteers to plant and care for trees. Throughout the utility's service territory, 145,169 volunteers have planted more than one million landscape-sized trees and seedlings since the partnership began in 1990.

This energy efficiency partnership saves energy by planting trees as wind blocks and to provide shade, but those trees provide so many additional benefits to the community. Trees reduce CO₂, improve air quality, reduce stormwater runoff, and decrease flash flooding severity, as well as provide a number of public health benefits. In addition, many of these plantings involve local schools, which provides a hands-on environmental lesson to the next generation.
2017 Branching Out Summary

2017 Branching Out Funding

| Alliant Energy Program Dollars | $484,715.00 |
| Match (includes cash donations, gifts-in-kind and nursery discounts) | $174,131.38 |
| Volunteer Hours* | $148,320.15 |
| 6,510 @$22.95 per hour | |
| **Total Program Dollar Resources** | **$807,166.53** |

*Variance due to some carryover projects having been planted in different years with different volunteer rates.

2017 Benefits

Energy Saved from Trees Planted

| Heating DTH | 6,707.16 |
| Cooling kWh | 332,793 |

Environmental Benefits

| 1,624,517.14 lbs. carbon sequestered |
| 5,192.57 lbs. (net) air pollutants reduced |
| 4,067,306.82 gallons stormwater offset |
| $18,711.58 savings from stormwater |
| $49,165.72 increase in property values |

Accounting for Tree Benefits

The benefits of urban trees can be calculated in many ways. Since a mature tree provides significantly more benefits than a young tree, Trees Forever uses a 40-year average of a tree’s benefits. These numbers are based on the US Forest Service’s Midwest Community Tree Guide (USDA Forest Service General Technical Report PSW-GTR-199). Thus, the numbers shown here are the benefits achieved annually, on average, for the next forty years of the trees planted in 2017. The formulas assume a one percent mortality rate per year.

2017 Branching Out Completed Projects

| 73 | Number of Projects Completed |
| 2,919 | Landscape-Sized Trees Planted 2,456 Deciduous / 463 Coniferous |
| 609 | Seedling Trees Planted** |
| 2,254 | Number of Volunteers Participating |
| 6,510 | Volunteer Hours Contributed |

**Seedlings are not included in benefits calculations and are funded through community matching dollars, not grant funding.

(above) Some lessons in conservation start early! This little boy helps break up soil during a May Branching Out planting in Whittier.

(left) Trees Forever TreeKeeper Seth Moomey and his kids were among the volunteers who planted 42 new trees in Cedar Rapids’ Ellis park. Experiences like this are possible thanks to the Branching Out partnership.

(below) Eldora volunteers plant a third round of trees in a local cemetery arboretum project thanks to a Branching Out grant.
A Spotlight on Special Projects!

In 2017, Trees Forever and Alliant Energy gave seven projects special attention. By highlighting three projects in the spring and four in the fall, the partnership celebrated some of the program’s successes and showcased plantings that emphasize the energy-saving benefits of trees!

2017 High Profile Spring Plantings

Happy Trails in Fort Madison
Fort Madison Middle School students and National Honor Society members planted 64 trees along the new PORT of Fort Madison Phase I trail that connects Bluff Road to Ivanhoe Park. Alliant Energy Regional Director and Trees Forever Board Chair, Brad Morgan (in gray shirt) helped students get started. Thanks to the Branching Out partnership and local fundraising efforts, these trees will shade the trail during the summer and be a natural wind block and snow fence during the winter!

A Rockin’ Service Day in Marion
Marion High School students planted 38 trees in Marion’s NEW Waldo’s Rock Park during the school’s “One Day in May” service day. With the assistance of Trees Forever, the Marion Parks Department, the Marion Tree Board and Alliant Energy, students got their hands dirty and dug in to create a beautiful landscape in the developing industrial area. These new trees will provide shade around parking, fishing areas and the trail.

Tree Love and Care after Recent Storms in West Branch
West Branch Community High School students celebrated Earth Day by giving their town a bit of “tree love!” Thanks to a Branching Out grant, they planted 34 trees along West Branch’s Main Street. West Branch recently removed a number of trees due to extensive storm damage, and these new trees helped replace those that were lost.

Project Grants Awarded to 66 Communities in 2017

Alden
Asbury
Atlantic (3)
Blairstown
Burlington
Carroll
Cedar Rapids (5)
Clinton (2)
Cresco
Creston (2)
Decorah
DeWitt
Dike
Drakesville
Eldon
Eldora
Fairfield (3)
Fort Madison (2)
George
Greenfield
Hiawatha
Hubbard
Jefferson
Kalona
Knoxville
Lansing
Lisbon
Manchester
Marion (2)
Marshalltown (2)
Mason City (2)
Massena
Miles
Monticello
Mount Vernon
Oelwein
Postville
Rolfe
Rudd
Sabula
Scranton
Spirit Lake
Storm Lake (2)
Villisca
Washington (2)
Waukon
West Branch (2)
West Burlington
Whittier
2017 High Profile Fall Plantings

25 Trees to Mark 25 Years in Atlantic
Atlantic Trees Forever, Trees Forever and Alliant Energy celebrated a 25-year partnership by doing what they do so well – planting trees! Thanks to this Branching Out partnership, 2,640 trees have been planted in Atlantic through the program's quarter-century history, and during the fall of 2017, the community leaders marked the milestone with 25 new trees.

Jump Starting Recovery
Doug Kopp, President of Alliant Energy's Iowa utility (second to the left), and Shannon Ramsay, Trees Forever CEO and Founding President (ninth to the left), were on the front lines of this planting in Decorah. Trees in Decorah have been ravaged on multiple fronts in recent years, succumbing to flooding, windstorms and the devastating emerald ash borer, but volunteers jump-started recovery efforts for this hard-hit town by planting more than a dozen trees in September. In total, 40 new trees were planted in 2017 at City Hall, Swimming Pool Park, Decorah High School, Trout Run Trail, College Drive and residential areas.

Improving Student Life Through Trees
Volunteers planted 56 trees at Southeastern Community College's West Burlington Campus, thanks to a Branching Out grant. The project was in conjunction with SCC's Building the Dream campus expansion initiative and coincides with the construction of the new Hall of Sciences. These new trees provide more than just a windbreak and shade for the buildings – they're intended to serve as a living lab for agriculture students and give life to the campus landscape.

Cedar Rapids’ Eastern Iowa Airport Entrance Gets a Makeover!
Travelers heading in and out of the Eastern Iowa Airport have a greener view now! Representatives from the City of Cedar Rapids, Alliant Energy, Trees Forever, the Eastern Iowa Airport and Green Iowa AmeriCorps planted trees and native plants in the median beds on Wright Brothers Boulevard.
Challenges & Opportunities

Branching Out is needed more than ever! Our community forests face many challenges, but fortunately, we also see many opportunities to grow our efforts.

Threats to Trees

Weather Extremes – Flooding, drought, hail, ice, wind and extremely cold winter temperatures take a toll on trees throughout the state in the past decade.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and Loss of Street Trees – This exotic Asian beetle has killed tens of thousands of ash trees in the Upper Midwest and has currently been confirmed in 53 Iowa counties. The loss of public trees, particularly in parks and along streets has presented a major challenge to Iowa communities. Some cities are moving to eliminate all street trees in an effort to reduce future maintenance. The Branching Out program has supported street trees projects for many years, and has helped communities realize the many benefits that tree-lined streets provide.

Reductions in Government Services – In 2017, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) dissolved the Iowa Forestry Bureau in response to reduced state budgets. As a result, DNR resources, such as district foresters, are in high demand, and communities are waiting longer to get advice from forestry experts on their tree questions. In addition, grant funding from state partners may be harder for communities to access.

Opportunities for Growth

Need for Water Quality Improvement and Flood Reduction – Iowans are demanding solutions to flooding and poor water quality; in fact, a water quality bill was one of the first pieces of legislation to be approved during the 2018 legislative session. While these issues and their causes are complex, urban trees are an important part of the solution. The canopies of trees help slow down and intercept a portion of rainfall. As surface runoff soaks into the ground, tree roots remove pollutants while absorbing gallons of the stormwater.

Community Fruit Tree Orchards – Community- and school-sponsored fruit tree orchards are a popular way to better connect people with a source of healthy food and to increase the quantity of fresh produce available to residents, students or local food banks.

NEW Tool: Open Tree Map

www.treesforever.org/treemap

Starting in 2017, Trees Forever and its community partners are GPS mapping all trees planted through Trees Forever programs – including Branching Out.

This exciting new tool allows community leaders and volunteers to see how their work is contributing a bigger movement with all Trees Forever partnerships.

Join Trees Forever on its mission to plant and care for trees and the environment by empowering people, building community and promoting stewardship.

©2018 Trees Forever. All rights reserved.