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Students plant trees in borough

April 26, 2013

By MARK MARONEY (mmaroney@sungazette.com) , Williamsport Sun-Gazette

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MONTGOMERY - "It's amazing to do some community service and help as much as we can," Jason Perch, a horticulture studies and forestry student at Pennsylvania College of Technology and a resident of Blakeslee, said Thursday.

He and other students, including some from Lycoming College, planted several crab apple and honey locust trees along Route 405.

The tree plantings, a project that has been ongoing since last year, were part of the colleges' contribution toward helping Revitalize Montgomery, a community-based group bent on improving the borough's aesthetics and using a state grant to fund projects for municipalities along the West Branch of the Susquehanna.

Article Photos



KAREN VIBERT-KENNEDY/Sun-GazetteChad Flood, of ...



Funds for the project were secured, in part, through a mini-grant from the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. It allows 61 trees to be planted along streams and within entry

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corridors leading into the borough.

"Montgomery is truly a river town in transition - working hard to improve its public image and enhance the quality of personal experiences for residents, businesses and visitors," said Becky Sanguedolce, chairwoman of the civic organization.

The Susquehanna Greenway Partnership has been working with borough and motivated residents to form Revitalize Montgomery, which is dedicated to improving the quality of life in the river community, according to Alice L. Trowbridge, a "lead" in the partnership.

The borough's portion of the grant was about \$5,000, according to Trowbridge.

Matching contributions required for the grant demonstrate the community's spirit of collaboration, using donations by local organizations, businesses and individuals combined with in-kind volunteer services of the two colleges, the borough and Riverside Campground.

"These gateway plantings will enhance a sense of arrival, buffer unsightly areas and help to improve first impressions of the community," she said.

"Honey locusts will be a large shade tree with a compound leaf that won't require raking," said Michael Dincher, professor of horticulture studies at Penn College.

The crab apple is a flowering tree that bears small fruit that will entice birds and squirrels and another variety of tree, a linden, will sprout green, ornately shaped leaves, he said.

The 45 trees arrived from a nursery in Buffalo, N.Y., on Wednesday. They were hoisted into place in various spots that had been dug and prepared for the planting ahead of time.

Students encountered difficulty in one hole on private property after hitting a rough spot that required additional labor. A hole-boring device was brought, and the students used shovels to penetrate the hard ground.

The rough spot could have been coal left over from when coal deliveries were common in the community, Dincher said.

Lycoming College professor Caroline Payne said the tree plantings were preparation for a classroom that will travel May 6-20 to a community in the Dominican Republic and plant fruit and hardwood trees in an orchard there.

Last fall, seven trees were planted. On Monday, Trowbridge said, seven were planted at the eastern gateway near the intersection of Thomas Avenue and Montgomery Street.

Two more will be planted in the borough park when a new sign arrives, she said.

Thirty-six trees were planted Thursday and, at 10 a.m. Saturday, the Montgomery High School Leo's Club and local Boy Scouts will plant the remaining nine near the boat launch.

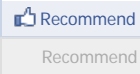


The addition of the shade and ornamental trees was thought to be another step toward the beautification of the community.

"It's a continued improvement," said Mayor Andrew Onufrak II, who was appreciative of the college students able to use their time, talent and labor on the project.

"We are doing a lot of little things over the years and these minor things are making a huge difference," he said.

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