



Greening the East Side

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Disturbed by the tree devastation resulting from last October's snowstorm, Eric Fox, owner of Mr. Fox Tires, is taking action. He is working with ReTree WNY and is committed to plant thousands of trees throughout the east side.

William Street between his store and Fillmore Avenue is the site of his first project where up to 300 trees plus shrubs and flowers will be planted. The beautification project is planned for this summer with help from AmeriCorps and neighborhood volunteers. Next up will be a similar effort along Bailey Avenue between William and Dingens streets.

Fox is also working to create 'mini-parks' on vacant, publicly-owned lots. "We'll be planting as many trees as we can to beautify and reforest the east side," he says. He is finding a great deal of support for his ideas at City Hall where there is growing recognition of the urban forest's social, economic and environmental benefits.

The tree-planting effort is expected to bring communities together while helping to improve the appearance and feel of Buffalo's neighborhoods. The urban forest helps to cool and clean the air, mitigates the noise of traffic, provides shade and beauty for residents, improves property values and provides shelter for an array of wildlife.

Long term, Fox is exploring the establishment of a foundation to help implement his ambitious greening plans. "My goal is to plant thousands of trees over the next five years in the inner city," declares Fox.

Fox bristles at the suggestion he is a role model, claiming he is only putting money where his passion is. “I am doing this to make a statement and a difference, though I would love to see other business jump in and help,” he says.

Organizers of [Re-Tree WNY](#) are buoyed by his commitment. “In the everyday hustle and bustle working to improve our city, Eric Fox shines as a beacon of light. He reminds us that our efforts are not in vain and that there are others who are willing to step up to the plate and serve as role models to us all,” says Justin Booth of the Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo and Re-Tree WNY.

Fox Tire has been family owned and operated since 1955 and currently has twenty five employees working a stone’s throw from the Central Terminal. Eric and his younger brother, Jordan, took over the business after their father, Don, passed away in 1992.

“We have built our business on good service. The east side is where I should be; on a busy thoroughfare and no competition nearby. My customers come from throughout WNY and business is fantastic. I am busier than I can handle and I am seeing 15-20 percent growth every year.”

Kevin Connors, who is advising Fox on installation of a green roof on one of his William Street buildings is amazed. “Eric is on fire and really motivated. He is dedicated to his own initiatives but is partnering with environmental groups compatible to what he wants to do,” says Connors. “He is committed to the east side where there is a critical need. It’s impressive.”

Photo credit: ReTree WNY. Newly planted tree on Dartmouth Avenue.

Get Connected: [Mr. Fox Tire Co.](#) 716.856.1696; 1035 William Street

The complete story on Eric’s plans can be found in the May print edition.