

Buffalo News

Another Voice / Storm Devastation

6/8/07 By Paul Maurer

The cover story on May 27 lamented the cutting down of Buffalo's storm battered trees, but there is also some very good news: Re-Tree WNY is gearing up to do a massive reforestation in the city and surrounding areas this fall, when the weather is again favorable for tree planting.

We already have planted 1,100 trees this spring and this effort took us in many directions, with the growth along streets as diverse as LeBrun, Davidson, Memorial Drive and Carlton which are but a few of the many Buffalo-area byways our dedicated all-volunteer force dug its shovels into. We've been in nearly every suburb, from Clarence to Cheektowaga and Amherst to Alden.

This remarkable effort has been supported by great people who aren't waiting for public dole or federal largess, just planting trees as fast as they are being donated from **Citizens like Eric Fox of Fox Tire**, corporations like Home Depot and nurseries like Dorr and Schinchtel's.

The Buffalo News has responded in a huge way, running a 100-day "Green Leag" campaign that has donations coming in from great companies like National Fuel, foundations like the Buffalo Sabres, and great corporate citizens like Jeremy Jacobs (Deleware North), Bob Wilmers (M&T Bank), Brian Lipke (Gibraltar Steel), Dick German (Buffalo Crushed Stone), Bob Brady (Moog), Howard Zemsky (Zemsky Family Foundation), Frank McGuire (McGuire Group), Chris Coch (New Era Cap) and many more. Buffalo News publisher Stan Lipsey and his wife, Judith, are matching contributions with their own money. My company, Citadel Broadcasting, is giving massive amounts of in-kind air time and office supply donations.

Not any less inspiring are the donations from this area's extremely generous folks, whether they gave money or just pulled on their garden gloves and said to us "how can I get started?"

We are plodding along, but are supported by great executive and legislative leaders from the whole Western New York governing delegation – federal, state, county and local. They are all working together to get us what we need so desperately: trees, supplies, equipment and manpower – either now, or to fortify us as we accomplish our Re-Tree WNY mission: 30,000 trees in five years.

We have a long way to go and need a huge volunteer planting force for the fall. We are forming that force immediately to train and activate in late October, so if you can participate please click on www.re-treewny.org or contact Youth Bureau AmeriCorps, our tremendously capable volunteer organization.

As my co-chairman, David "The Tree Guy" Colligan, promises, "we are going to return this area to pre-October storm conditions or better." So have patience, Western New Yorkers, we're coming with our shovels in hand to your park or neighborhood soon.

Paul Maurer is co-chairman of Re-Tree WNY