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Hoosier Heartland Begins Project to Plant a Million Trees in Central Indiana

Hoosier Heartland announced its focus project *Plant A Million* will aim to plant one million trees in central Indiana. The recommended rate of canopy cover for livable, sustainable communities is more than double that of central Indiana's current rate (16%). Part of the GROW Initiative, *Plant A Million* will increase tree canopy while also improving the quality of life for the central Indiana community.

"Trees provide not only add aesthetic value to an area, but also provide health and environmental benefits," shares *Plant A Million* Project Coordinator Bob Eddleman. "They decrease air pollution by storing atmospheric carbon, as well as reducing the need for energy consumption (due to their direct shading of buildings). Trees also improve water quality by absorbing some of the storm water pollutants washed off of urban, commercial, and suburban areas. In addition to the health benefits, trees can help to stabilize eroding steam banks and provide habitat for wildlife."

Two of the nation's fastest growing counties (Hendricks and Hamilton) are found here in Central Indiana. Development and urban sprawl can cause an alarming decrease in trees, their canopy cover, and the many benefits they provide. Central Indiana has fewer parks, green space, and tree canopy cover than most comparable major metropolitan areas in the country.

Although this project may seem daunting, Eddleman has a game plan: "To bring this project to fruition, we will enlist the partnership of local Soil & Water Conservation Districts, as well as other like-minded businesses and organizations. " Since 1969, Hoosier Heartland has successfully carried out over 500 projects to improve the quality of life in central Indiana.

Plant A Million will be the theme of Hoosier Heartland's GROW Initiative Banquet held on August 28th. Kevin Gregory, Chief Meteorologist RTV6, will be the Master of Ceremonies. For ticket information, contact the Hoosier Heartland RC&D office at (317) 290-3250.

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