



## Savannah Tree Foundation

**For Immediate Release**

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### **“120 YEARS OF TREES AT TYBEE”**

#### ***TYBEE ISLAND TO CELEBRATE ITS 120<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY BY PLANTING 120 COMMEMORATIVE TREES***

***Savannah Tree Foundation received 1 of 12 national grants  
from The Home Depot Foundation to do so***

(Tybee Island, GA, October 12, 2007) – Residents of Tybee Island will celebrate her 120<sup>th</sup> birthday by planting 120 live oak, bald cypress and magnolia trees on Saturday, October 27, 2007. A separate commemorative tree planting featuring local dignitaries, elected officials, and national representatives will take place one week earlier at the Celebrate Tybee festival on October 20<sup>th</sup>.

The planting is the result of an initiative by Tybee Island Mayor Jason Buelterman to commemorate Tybee's birthday through planting trees. Councilman Paul Wolff and Councilwoman Kathryn Williams initially approached the Savannah Tree Foundation about the idea in the summer of 2007.

“About five years ago the Savannah Tree Foundation partnered with the City of Tybee to plant 100 live oaks around the island,” said Paul Wolff. “Most of those trees are thriving, and will enhance the island's canopy for many years. Tybee's birthday seemed like a good time to do something for future generations, so once again we called upon the Savannah Tree Foundation for support.”

At that point, the Savannah Tree Foundation applied for a Neighborwoods Investments grant from the Home Depot Foundation and the Alliance for Community Trees. In early September of 2007, the Savannah Tree Foundation was notified it had been awarded one of 12 grants nation-wide to fund the purchase of trees, out of a field of 51 grant applicants. The grant for \$5,576.00 will also enable the foundation to purchase delivery of the trees and do grassroots marketing.

“We are thrilled to be partnering with eminent organizations that have national reputations for supporting community trees,” said Diane Houston, President of the Board of Directors for the Savannah Tree Foundation. “We hope this opportunity will flourish into an ongoing relationship that enables our foundation to continue to plant trees throughout the Savannah-Chatham County area.”

“We were so happy to receive this grant,” said STF Communications Director and grant writer Adrienn Mendonca. “It took a great deal of work, and represents both the commitment of the Tybee Island community to replanting trees in public places, and the commitment of our foundation's business partners who provided matching funds for the grant.” Businesses that provided a match for this grant include Melaver, Inc., Georgia Power and Forklift & Bobcats of Savannah.

Part of the grant writing process required the foundation to evaluate the community's need utilizing statistics and econometrics. Mendonca was not surprised to find median home values rose from \$79,800 in 1990 to \$177,400 in 2000 and \$464,500 in 2006-07, which represented an increase of almost 162% in the last seven years alone (*figure derived from all residential sales on Tybee Island between August 2006 to August 2007*). Issues of gentrification, affordable housing, and disappearing green space all played a role in the award of this grant.

"One of the main reasons our organization was awarded a grant is due to the grant narrative we wrote, which discussed Tybee's struggle to manage burgeoning residential and commercial development," said Mendonca. The narrative resonated with one of the grant panelists who was also from an island community that suffered from similar problems.

"Living on a fragile barrier island, we realize the importance of maintaining the maritime forest and tree canopy," said Kathryn Williams. "Because property values have gone up tremendously, pressure to develop the island is intense, and trees are often sacrificed. We feel it's important to maintain trees on public property and to serve as a good example for private property owners in our community."

While the actual tree planting will take place on October 27<sup>th</sup>, a ceremonial tree planting will take place as part of the Celebrate Tybee festival on October 20<sup>th</sup> from 4:30 – 5:00 p.m. Terri Morton, a representative of the Home Depot Foundation, will be on hand to help plant three trees at Memorial Park, along with a number of local dignitaries and elected officials.

On October 27<sup>th</sup>, volunteers from the Savannah Tree Foundation, the City of Tybee Island, the Home Depot Store #170 (Victory Drive), the Home Depot Store #122 (Abercorn Street), Melaver, Inc, Georgia Power, Tybee Beautification Association, Friends of the Tybee Post Theater, Tybee Island Fine Arts Commission, Tybee Island Garden Club, and Tybee Neighbors Planning Team will help plant the trees at Memorial Park, Jaycee Park and Tybee Island Campground.

"The City of Tybee is proud to partner with the Savannah Tree Foundation as we embark on another exciting tree planting effort," said Mayor Jason Buelterman. "This project will be part of the City's 120th anniversary celebration as we plant 120 trees on Tybee city property to commemorate each year since the incorporation of The City of Tybee in 1887. Tybee's residents and visitors continue to benefit from the City's relationship with the Savannah Tree Foundation as we ensure that future generations will benefit from a healthy tree canopy on beautiful Tybee Island."

The tree planting is a registered activity of National NeighborWoods Month. "National NeighborWoods Month offers a unique opportunity for people to understand the contributions of trees to the health, beauty and livability of their communities," said Kelly Caffarelli, Vice President of The Home Depot Foundation. "By partnering with the Alliance for Community Trees and local NeighborWoods organizations like Savannah Tree Foundation, The Foundation is able to further its goals of investing in the overall health and success of our communities."

**TYBEE ISLAND COMMEMORATIVE TREE PLANTING & DIRECTIONS:** Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup> from 4:30 – 5:00 p.m. at Memorial Park on Tybee Island. Take Highway 80-East to Butler Avenue. Memorial Park will be on the right near Tybee's city hall.

*Interviews with representatives from the Savannah Tree Foundation, Alliance for Community Trees or The Home Depot Foundation can be arranged by request. For more information, contact STF Communications Director Adrienn Mendonca at 912-233-8733 (office) or 912-713-3313 (cell). Information on the Savannah Tree Foundation is also available at [www.savannahtreefoundation.com](http://www.savannahtreefoundation.com).*

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