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ARKANSAS AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

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WES WARD
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

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Shade Trees on Playgrounds Program to Provide Added Shade on 10 School Playgrounds

LITTLE ROCK, AR – The Shade Trees on Playgrounds Program (S.T.O.P.) was organized to lower adult skin cancer risk by reducing childhood exposure to direct sunlight where children play, like school playgrounds. Ten playgrounds were chosen in 2017 as S.T.O.P. program tree recipients. Schools will host tree planting ceremonies and begin long term tree maintenance with students through November 1.

“The S.T.O.P. program is a great effort because it creates a memorable impression on students at each ceremony, which will hopefully lead to life-long enjoyment of trees and the outdoors. Arkansas Forestry Commission personnel coordinate tree planting sites and ceremonies with teachers and go to every effort to make this unique to the needs of each school,” says Urban Forestry Coordinator, Alison Litchy.

Five large shade trees will be planted at the following schools, on the following dates:

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| • Lavaca (Sebastian County) | 10/5/17 |
| • Northside Elementary in Cabot (Lonoke County) | 10/6/17 |
| • Newark Elementary School (Independence County) | 10/9/17 |
| • Highland School District (Sharp County) | 10/13/17 |
| • McGehee Elementary (Desha County) | 10/16/17 |
| • Dardanelle Elementary School (Yell County) | 10/18/17 |
| • Sheridan Elementary School (Grant County) | 10/20/17 |
| • Clarksville Primary School (Johnson County) | 10/23/17 |
| • University Heights Intermediate - Jonesboro (Craighead County) | 10/27/17 |
| • Clinton Elementary Sherwood (Van Buren County) | 11/1/17 |

Each May, Arkansas schools are invited to submit S.T.O.P. applications. To qualify, participating schools must lack shade, agree to use Arkansas Forestry Commission (AFC) curriculum to emphasize the importance of trees and forestry in Arkansas at a ceremony before the tree planting, hold a tree planting ceremony with students, and agree to long-term maintenance of the shade trees planted. AFC personnel assist with the transport and planting of shade trees. Contact Alison Litchy for more information at Alison.litchy@arkansas.gov.

The mission of the AFC is to protect Arkansas’s forests, and those who enjoy them, from wildland fire and natural hazards while promoting rural and urban forest health, stewardship, development, and conservation for all generations of Arkansans. The AFC is a part of the Arkansas Agriculture Department.

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