



CITY EMPLOYEES and volunteers planted 16 trees in the Belle City Park on Dec. 13.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Tree beautification project completed at Belle park

City employees and volunteers met Dec. 13 at Belle City Park with coffee and hot chocolate in hand, ready to plant 16 trees purchased through Central Electric's Green Tree Partnership grant, and private donations.

The Osage Arts Community (OAC) and the city of Belle were recently awarded two separate grants through Central Electric Power Cooperative and Three Rivers Electric Cooperative for the purchase of 10 trees to plant in Belle City Park. The cooperatives recognize the impact that trees have upon the quality of life and the Central Electric's Green Tree Partnership is designed to assist communities in the purchase and planting of trees.

In addition, six citizens purchased trees in memory of loved ones. Memory trees were purchased by Richard and Barb Huse (in memory of Roy and Lois Huse), Brenda Rakestraw

(two trees in memory of Danny Rakestraw and Shirley Stough), Steve Vogt (in memory of Brock Vogt); Pat Henley (in memory of Herb Henley) and Shelly and Taylor Honse and Ruth Buddemeyer (in memory of Sherri Pyatt).

Signs were ordered through World Class Signs of Bland and will be installed at each of the memory trees.

Volunteers Ty and Bev Abel and Mark McClane worked tirelessly with city employees Nathan Abel, Darryl Jenkins and Barb Schaller to get those trees in the ground before the freezing weather hit. Enjoy the new trees at the east side of the lake, near the walking/bicycling paved road and around the playground. The group planted nuttall oaks, skyline honeylocust, bloodgood planetrees and bald cypress trees.

The goal is to replace the aging trees in the park. The Department of Conservation con-

ducted a study of the trees in Belle City Park and recommended that 39 new trees be planted.

Work will be done in the future to remove dead and trim damaged trees.

Vogt said that with grants through the Central Electric Power Cooperative, Three Rivers Cooperative, those who donate money to purchase trees, the city employees and wonderful volunteers, these beautification projects are made possible in our community.

The city is still working towards the remaining 23 trees. Schaller plans to do a second tree planting project at the park in two to three years.

"We need to tend and water these trees for that long," Schaller said. "Did you know, the first year planted, the tree 'sleeps,' the second year, the tree 'creeps' and the third year, the tree 'leaps,' meaning it takes three years for a tree to really start to grow."