

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rensselaer Launches Comprehensive Tree Inventory to Strengthen Urban Forest

Rensselaer, IN (April 2025) – The Rensselaer Urban Forestry Council (RUFC), in collaboration with the City of Rensselaer and the Jasper Newton Foundation, is proud to announce the launch of a citywide tree inventory project. This initiative, supported through a \$157,945 grant from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources' Community and Urban Forestry (CUF) program and the USDA Forest Service, will catalog and assess the health of public trees throughout Rensselaer's streets, parks, and public properties.

Davey Resource Group, Inc. (DRG), an industry leader in urban forestry consulting, has been selected to carry out this work. Certified Arborists from DRG will be on-site this April and May to collect data on thousands of trees using GIS-enabled handheld devices to map tree locations, document species, size, and condition, and identify any concerns such as deadwood, disease, or damage.

"This inventory will give the City a valuable snapshot of our existing urban forest," said Heather Hall, Parks Superintendent for the City of Rensselaer. "Having accurate, professional data will allow us to better care for our trees, prioritize maintenance, plan future plantings, and make decisions that support a healthy and resilient tree canopy."

The data collected will be uploaded to a tree inventory software system that allows dynamic tracking, planning, and analysis. This will inform a citywide strategy for tree maintenance and planting in support of a more sustainable and equitable urban forest.

Karen Stanley, RUFC Board Member, emphasized the broader vision: "This project is about more than just data. It's about engaging the community in understanding the essential benefits trees provide—from improving air quality and managing stormwater to providing shade and enhancing neighborhood character."

The tree inventory is one part of a larger, multi-year project made possible through the Inflation Reduction Act funding. Over the next three years, RUFC will work with the City and the Jasper Newton Foundation to plant trees in residential neighborhoods, distribute educational materials, and host public programs that promote tree stewardship.

As fiscal agent, the Jasper Newton Foundation will help manage and streamline grant reporting, ensuring smooth implementation of this impactful project.

Community members will see DRG arborists working throughout the city in the coming months. For more information about the tree inventory or how to get involved, please contact the Rensselaer Urban Forestry Council at PO BOX 23, Rensselaer, IN 47978 or follow updates on the **Rensselaer Urban Forestry Council Facebook page**.

This project is supported by the Indiana DNR Division of Forestry's CUF program and funded in part by the USDA Forest Service through the Inflation Reduction Act. The USDA and all partners involved in this project are equal opportunity providers.