

“Habits of Successful Arborists” This Year’s Theme for the Great Plains Tree Conference

By Kent Holm, Conference & Workshop Committee Chair and President-Elect

It’s easy to scream “You won’t want to miss this!” but it’s another thing to deliver. Your NAA Conference Committee has not only put together a great lineup of speakers and topics for the upcoming February 6 & 7, 2012 Great Plains Tree Conference, but has also added several new offerings that you won’t want to miss. New this year:

- Two workshops on day two of the conference, and because they are not concurrent, you’ll get to attend both!
- An expanded time for the vendors and exhibits.
- A recognition and awards dinner on Monday evening where we will honor the 29 charter members of NAA and present the Educator of the Year, Arborist of the Year, and NAA’s newest honor, the Lifetime Achievement Award.
- A new venue ... the beautiful Lied Lodge in Nebraska City. There’s no better setting for a conference on trees than the home of Arbor Day!

Check out this great lineup of topics and speakers:

- Former NAA member and now Seattle, Washington City Forester Nolan Rundquist returns to Nebraska to deliver our keynote address on the state of arboriculture and the challenges for the profession.
- Dr. Mark Harrell from UNL will update us with the most recent information on plant health issues, insects and diseases. EAB, Thousand Cankers, pine wilt, ... the list goes on ... and Mark will get everyone up to speed.
- Safety considerations for tree workers. Always a timely topic, we’ll have Lon Nutter from Asplundh outline the things you need to know to do your job safely.
- Dr. John Ball will be a heavy hitter at the conference, leading a 2nd day morning workshop “Flooding Impacts on Trees.” He will also present a Monday afternoon breakout session on the importance of understanding and utilizing the “best science” when it comes to tree care and will cap off the evening with an after dinner presentation on the history of arboriculture.
- Alex McKiernan, Dangerfield Tree Service, will lead a session for climbers on upgrading your skills and abilities – including some hands-on demonstrations. We’re also working on some additional demonstrations in the exhibit area.
- Ed Hayes with Safe Trees, LLC, will present a Monday afternoon overview of hazard tree recognition and risk assessment. Ed will then follow that up with a Tuesday afternoon workshop that may include some hands-on demonstrations outside (weather permitting).
- Bob Bernier, Nebraska Business Development, will present information specifically targeted to small businesses; how to improve business practices and potential services that are available to small businesses.

New to the conference this year, in addition to the expanded two-day format, is a recognition dinner for the NAA's 29 Charter members. We hope that you will join us as we pay tribute to those Charter members that recognized the need for a Nebraska Arborists Association and provided the leadership to make it happen. The Nebraska Forest Service's Justin Evertson will emcee the evening's events which will begin with a 5:30 p.m. social (complimentary soft drinks/cash bar) with dinner at 6:00 p.m., followed by the formal recognition of the 29 Charter members and the presentation of the NAA's Educator and Arborist of the Year Awards and ... the newly-instituted "NAA Lifetime Achievement Award." Dr. John Ball will cap off the evening with his take on the history of arboriculture.

Spend time visiting the exhibits and meeting with vendors to learn more about their products and services. The always popular silent auction will open up Monday morning and conclude that afternoon. This great event raises money for the NAA Education Fund – the source for the scholarships to our educational offerings. Obviously we want you to come and bid on all the great items but we'd also like you to consider donating an item or two to the silent auction. It's a great way to support arboriculture education! Contact Jim Keepers (jkeepers@msn.com) if you have an item you'd like to donate.

The 2012 Conference will be one of the best ever. It's the Nebraska Arborists Association's main event at the birthplace of Arbor Day. What could be better? Watch for registration information to be posted on the NAA website in late December.