The Faces of Urban Forestry

Ed Morgan
Mayor

Abingdon, Virgina

Trees bring tourists to town and boost the economy.

Trees are a big part of the ambiance of the 8,000-person Abingdon, Virginia, a tourism hotspot and arguably the state's oldest town west of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

"The historic districts would not be the same without trees," according to Mayor Ed Morgan, who says the town's neighborhood charm draws tourists and keeps the local economy humming.

"We have come to recognize the economic value of trees, as well as their contribution to the quality of life here in town," he says.

Grants from the state of Virginia have been crucial in getting more trees planted, and a partnership with the Veterans Park Memorial Foundation transformed city's 13-acre Memorial Park into a site where trees honor the area's fallen soldiers.

Citywide, the trees shade more than 23 percent of the municipality and provide special cover to the 35-mile Virginia Creeper Trail, which begins in Abingdon and is popular with hikers, horseback riders and bicyclists. Mayor Morgan says the trees make the trail "the most scenic bike ride you will ever encounter."

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The 35-mile Virginia Creeper Trail is one of the many tourist attractions in and around Abingdon. It is popular with hikers, horseback riders and bicyclists. Trees contribute to what some call "the most scenic bike ride you will ever encounter."