

The Faces of Urban Forestry



Paul Zimny
Firefighter



Trees Make New Park a Community Gathering Place

Years ago when the bend in a nearby river channel was straightened, it left an empty patch of land where the residents of Royalton started to plant trees. The land has become Memorial Park and Paul Zimny sees this as a valuable part of his community of 1,200 residents.

“The trees make the park a peaceful place,” says Paul. “Kids are always spending time in the park. During the spring, classes use it, too.” Families extend use of Memorial Park throughout the summer for picnics and the site serves as a destination for all ages close to the center of town. Memorial Park has been such a success as a gathering place that it has served as springboard to launch the creation of a nearby skate park, natural area park, and a splash park.

The Royalton Tree Board has used modest funding from city council and grants from the University of Minnesota, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the state’s Department of Transportation to plant trees not only in the park, but at the local school and along a major highway that runs through town.

Planting has demonstrated how the valuable tree resource contributes to the well-being of residents in a small town like Royalton. Thanks to the support of the tree board and its cooperators, the town’s community forest and its park system are providing wonderful places to bring people together.

“Kids are always spending time in the park.”

—Paul Zimny



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A joint project of U.S. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry, the National Association of State Foresters, and the Arbor Day Foundation. For more information visit arborday.org/faces