

# The Faces of Urban Forestry



**Rich Rinchich**  
Director, Public Works



## Replanting Lost Trees Restores Hope

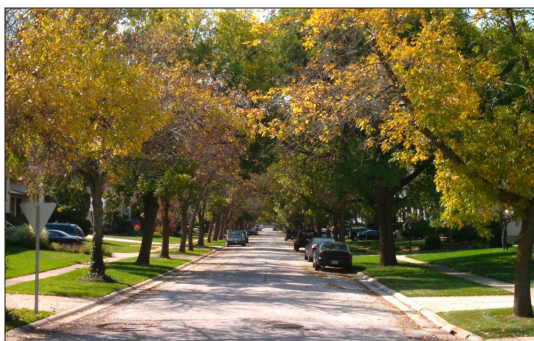
In only three years, Oak Forest residents found themselves going from having a beautifully canopied urban forest to devastation. The culprit was the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). It destroyed nearly 24 percent of the city's parkway trees.

Rich Rinchich recalls the trauma as residents watched the removal of 1,777 trees. "One of the toughest things about taking trees down is that people in our community are very passionate about their trees," says Rich. And while the city had funds to remove the trees, they did not have money for replacement. Then they learned that U.S. Forest Service funds were available through the Morton Arboretum and Metropolitan Mayors Caucus to help communities restore urban forests impacted by EAB. The city used the federal dollars to plant 838 new trees, using a diverse mix of 18 different species.

Importantly, the replanting gave the community hope. "When we got the grant, it was like a shot of espresso after being up for 30 hours! It took our hope from a dream to an 'Oh my gosh, we can actually do this!' I had one of the residents come up to me and thank me for her tree and give me a hug. After going through the trauma of EAB and the removals, the ability to do more, and to be this bright spot – a Johnny Appleseed – it was great!"

“You feel so beat down as you watch these trees coming down.”

– Rich Rinchich



Before Emerald Ash Borer Infestation



Replanted Street



### The Faces of Urban Forestry

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](http://arborday.org/faces)