

By ROBERT PIERCE • Daily Leader Liberal's Beautification Department would like to remind citizens that Spring Tree Match and Tree Rebate programs are underway.

Applications for the Tree Match program are available at the Parks and Rec office located at Blue Bonnet Park, 1109 W. Seventh St. This program is open to any resident, business or non-profit organization, such as churches, that reside within the city limits of Liberal. People can order between one to five trees per residence.

The spring order is expected to be delivered around Thursday. Pick up will be at the Parks and Rec Maintenance Building at 724 Armory Road from 3 to 6 p.m. Friday and from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday. These are the only times trees can be picked up. If the delivery date changes, people will be notified personally.

Trees will be in 7-gallon containers except where noted, and they will only cost \$20 each.

There will only be a spring order this year.

The Tree Rebate program will also be for residents only, and the rebate will be 50 percent of the tree cost up to \$75. It must have at least a 1.5-inch diameter trunk or be a 15-gallon container tree. Coupons will be picked up at participating dealers where the tree was purchased. Limit is one per household.

Liberal was also recognized by the non-profit Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree City USA community for its commitment to urban forestry.

It is the 27th year Liberal has earned this national designation.

The Tree City USA program is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters and the USDA Forest Service.

Liberal has met the four standards to become a Tree City USA community. Tree City USA communities have a tree board or department, a tree-care ordinance, a comprehensive community forestry program and an Arbor Day observance and proclamation.

"We commend Liberal's elected officials, volunteers and its citizens for providing vital care for its urban forest," said John Rosenow, chief executive and founder of the Arbor Day Foundation. "Trees provide numerous environmental, economical and health benefits to millions of people each day, and we applaud communities that make planting and caring for trees a top priority."

Communities that earn Tree City USA recognition not only have taken the time to meet the four standards, they know that trees:

- o Promote healthier communities by filtering air by removing dust and other particles;

- o Moderate climate, conserve water and provide vital habitat for wildlife;
- o Reduce the heat island effect in urban areas caused by pavement and buildings; and
- o Increase property values, reduce energy use and add beauty to homes and neighborhoods.

More information about Tree City USA can be found at www.arboday.org/TreeCityUSA.