

History of the City of Olean's Forestry Program

In the years leading up to 1986 – John Ash, holding the position of Common Council President, recognized the importance of our tree canopy and community forest and pursued the creation of a tree program. In 1986, Alderman Ash's efforts paid off as he was able to successfully implement a Forestry Program for the community. During that same year, Mr. Ash became Mayor and the City of Olean was awarded its first Tree City USA designation.

On May 1, 1986, the Common Council commemorated their commitment to the new Forestry Program with the planting of a "Liberty Elm" in historic Lincoln Park. At that time, this particular tree was one of a hundred Liberty Elms made available by the New York State Arbor Day Committee to communities in New York State. The Liberty Elm, a disease resistant tree, commemorated the centennial of the Statue of Liberty.

A Memorial Tree Program also began in 1986. Trees were planted either in memory of or in honor of someone or something of great importance. Throughout the years, approximately 200 trees were planted in City-owned parks or along the street rights-of-way.

The first tree inventory for the City of Olean was conducted and completed in 1986. This inventory was done in book form. Since technology and the science of community forestry management has advanced throughout the years, this current inventory will greatly aid the City in managing its forest for many years to come.

While the activities performed in 1986 proved to be of great importance and dedication, our Forestry Program has demonstrated a colossal evolution since that time. It has shown success in educating the public and elected officials on the importance of trees in our community and their vast benefits. Our Forestry Program prioritizes keeping the public safe from potentially hazardous trees, replanting in order to keep our tree stock healthy and recognizing the environmental benefits they provide to our residents and visitors.