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Johnson County, Indiana

Even planting tree goes long way for environment

By DAILY JOURNAL

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For years, community activist Hugh Ross handed out tree seedlings in Greenwood. He also pitched in with some mulch and planting instructions to give the young trees a fighting chance at making it.

On Friday, the city will continue Ross' legacy by giving away about 1,000 seedlings.

Ross, who founded the informal group Pleasant Greenways, gave away hundreds of seedlings of Indiana tree species every year; he died in December 2006.

In Franklin, an arborist will talk to schoolchildren about the role of trees in the environment.

Whiteland will plant 400 evergreen seedlings around the perimeter of the town's wastewater treatment plant and its street department facilities.

The events are part of Arbor Day celebrations. Indiana celebrates Arbor Day on the fourth Friday of April.

This places the day close to Earth Day, which was Tuesday; and the days couldn't be more closely aligned. Both stress the need for responsible environmental stewardship not just for today but for generations to come.

In 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt promoted a national Arbor Day with these thoughts for America's schoolchildren:

"It is well that you should celebrate your Arbor Day thoughtfully, for within your lifetime the nation's need of trees will become serious. We of an older generation can get along without what we have, though with growing hardship; but in your full manhood and womanhood you will want what nature once so bountifully supplied, and man so thoughtlessly destroyed; and because of that want you will reproach us, not for what we have used, but for what we have wasted.

IF YOU GO

What: Greenwood Parks and Recreation Department's Arbor Day tree seedling giveaway

When: 8 a.m. Friday

Where: Community Center, 100 Surina Way, Greenwood

"For the nation as for the man or woman, and the boy or girl, the road to success is the right use of what we have and the improvement of present opportunity. ...

"A people without children would face a hopeless future; a country without trees is almost as hopeless; forests which are so used that they can not renew themselves will soon vanish, and with them all their benefits. ...

"When you help to preserve our forests or to plant new ones, you are acting the part of good citizens. ... If your Arbor Day exercises help you to realize what benefits each one of you receives from the forests, and how by your assistance these benefits may continue, they will serve a good end."

His points remain just as valid a century later.

Arbor Day remains a symbol for wise use of resources. The activities planned for Friday offer a chance to put lessons about nature to work.

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