

A green rectangular graphic with a repeating pattern of stylized leaves. In the center is a white rectangle containing the text "FOREST RELEAF OF MISSOURI" in bold green capital letters, and "IMPACT STORIES" in green capital letters below it.

## FOREST RELEAF OF MISSOURI IMPACT STORIES

**“Forest ReLeaf Trees made it possible for Lebanon, MO to become a Tree City USA”**

**-Don Allen**

## 101 Tree Cities

Within the last decade, the City of Lebanon, MO joined 100 other cities across the state to earn the title of Tree City USA, all with the help of Forest ReLeaf trees. To achieve the designation of Tree City USA, communities must meet four essential standards recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation:

1. A Tree Board or Department
2. A Public Tree Care Ordinance
3. A community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita
4. An Arbor Day observance and proclamation

While these standards seem simple, they can only be achieved with strong tree advocacy and, most importantly, trees! Fortunately, the City of Lebanon found both through the efforts of Don Allen. At 85 years old, Allen continues bringing passion for trees later to life. Six years ago, he began partnering with Forest ReLeaf, and since then, nearly 500 trees have been planted throughout Lebanon.

Allen’s work has been particularly impactful as new land is acquired by the city’s Parks Department, leading to the creation of new parks. Reforesting these newly developed areas can be a costly challenge, but through Forest ReLeaf’s CommuniTree program, planting hundreds of trees can be a reality and meeting Tree City USA guidelines achievable. Their personal goal is to connect all the parks through tree-lined walking trails, further enhancing the city’s green infrastructure.

Despite his role in organizing many tree plantings, Allen humbly states, “500 trees seem like a lot, but is just a drop in the bucket.” (As long as Forest ReLeaf is here, we are happy to continue providing free trees.) Though it may take many more trees to reach the city’s goals, the benefits of a healthy tree canopy are already tangible for the people of Lebanon. And visitors to the city will see this hard work reflected not only in the growing green canopy, but also in the proud “Tree City USA” sign that welcomes them.



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