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LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Matti H. Bower and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager

DATE: January 28, 2008

SUBJECT: Tree City USA Award

I am proud to inform you that the City of Miami Beach has been named a Tree City USA for 2007. The Tree City USA program is sponsored by the National Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters and the USDA Forest Service. Designation as a Tree City USA recognizes communities that have proven their commitment to a healthy urban forest and an effective urban forestry program. It honors the efforts of the elected officials, staff and citizens who work to maintain and enhance their urban forest.

To qualify for Tree City USA a city must meet four standards:

- 1) A Tree Board or Department responsible for the care and management of the city's trees. In Miami Beach, this responsibility resides in the Department of Parks & Recreation, Greenspace Management Division, and Urban Forestry Program. The program is headed by Chris Latt Ph.D. Dr. Latt has three forestry degrees, and is an International Society of Arboriculture certified arborist and a graduate of the Society of Municipal Arborists' Municipal Forester Institute.
- 2) A Tree Care Ordinance. In Miami Beach, Ordinance Number 2000-3279 addresses tree care, maintenance and protection.
- 3) A Community Forestry Program With An Annual Budget of at Least \$2 Per Capita. Miami Beach easily exceeded this standard with the Urban Forestry Program budget (including the tree maintenance crew and salaries), the Reforestation Program which the City Commission authorized in 2007, and tree planting as part of other city development projects.
- 4) An Arbor Day Observance and Proclamation. Mayor David Dermer proclaimed April 21, 2007 Arbor Day in Miami Beach. The celebration was held at Marjory Stoneman Douglas Park, and volunteers planted 23 trees.

Trees are a vital part of the city infrastructure, providing numerous environmental, economic, and social benefits. Among the identified benefits of trees are cleaner air, reduced energy usage, less storm water runoff, amelioration of high urban temperatures, higher property values, improved aesthetics, a greater sense of well-being, reduced anxiety levels, and lower crime rates.

In addition to the inherent benefits of trees, the Tree City USA designation provides additional benefits. Being a Tree City USA projects a positive image and tells visitors, convention organizers and prospective businesses that ours is a community that cares about a healthy environment and the quality of life. It provides a sense of pride to the various people who work to improve the urban forest, and may encourage other citizens to plant trees and properly care for those they have. The designation also may give Tree City USA communities preferential treatment when grant money is allocated for trees or forestry programs.

Please note that in F.Y.2006/ 07 the City adopted and initiated our Reforestation Plan which called for the planting of at least 5,000 trees on city property within the next four to five years. In the first year the City planted in excess of 1,000 trees through out the City's parks and ROW. The plan will continue in the spring of 2008 planting in other public areas not being improved by the GO bond projects.


JMG/RCM/KS/JO

c: Robert C. Middaugh, Assistant City Manager
Kevin Smith, Parks & Recreation Director
John Oldenburg, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director



The National Arbor Day Foundation[®]

211 N. 12th St. • Lincoln, NE 68508 • 402-474-5655 arborday.org

We inspire people to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees.

January 14, 2008

The Honorable Matti H. Bower
Mayor of the City of Miami Beach
1700 Convention Center Dr.
Miami Beach, FL 33139

Dear Mayor Bower,

Congratulations to Miami Beach on being named as a 2007 Tree City USA!

Trees in our cities and towns help clean the air, conserve soil and water, moderate temperature, and bring nature into our daily lives. Trees are a vital component of the infrastructure in our cities and towns, and provide environmental and economical benefits. A community, and its citizens, that recognize these benefits and provide needed care for its trees deserves recognition and thanks.

Tree City USA recognizes communities that have proven their commitment to an effective, ongoing community forestry program. Such a program is one marked by renewal and improvement.

Tree City USA is sponsored in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters and the USDA Forest Service. State foresters are responsible for the presentation of the Tree City USA flag and other materials. We will forward your awards to Shirley Frazier in your state forester's office. They will be coordinating the presentation with you. It would be especially appropriate to make the Tree City USA award a part of your Arbor Day ceremony.

Again, congratulations on receiving this national recognition for your tree-care program.

Best regards,

John Rosenow
Chief Executive

cc: Dr. Chris Latt