

Our Essay

May 18th and 20th of 2013 witnessed the culmination of projects beginning one year, five years, seven years, 10 years, and 101 years ago. One year since Carlson Funeral Home began planning and laying the ground work for the anniversary Elm planting project. Five years of Michael Carlson's post-secondary education ending with his graduation from Worsham College making him the fifth generation of the Carlson family to begin a career in funeral service. Seven years since a fateful day in a Neenah, Wisconsin cemetery. Ten years including 2013 that the Carlson Funeral Home has participated in the Pursuit of Excellence program through NFDA. The decision to participate in POE has proven to be extremely worthwhile for the both the firm and the Rhineland community. Finally, 101 years, represents the number of years my family has been blessed with the opportunity to "serve" the families of our community.

So how did we get to this point? Back in the late 1800's, my great grandfather, August Carlson embarked on a journey from his native Sweden bound for the United States. Upon his arrival in this country, he continued following his fellow Swedish immigrants to the Great Lakes region, specifically Bark River, Michigan in the U.P. Because of tragic circumstances and then a fluke of scheduling our family has been in Rhineland and in funeral service for over 101 years and five generations. The story is quite interesting and is well documented in the newspaper stories that you will find later in this presentation.

So there is August, my great-grandfather, then Rudolph, (my grandfather) and his brother Ceaser, then my dad David and his brother James, myself Bruce Carlson, my brother-in-law John Mayo, and finally Michael, my son. Over the years we have had the funeral home, a furniture store for 50 years closing in 1963 and at one time the ambulance service. Fast forward to 1985, when I returned from mortuary school at Minnesota, it is my dad, my uncle Jim and I. Uncle Jim retires in 1985-86 and in 1989 my dad and father-in-law both die of "sudden" heart attacks at the ages of 54, my father in law the night before Thanksgiving and my dad three days after Christmas. I was twenty nine years of age and I went from apprentice and car washer to President in just four short years. What does that have to do with anything?

I have been in charge for the last 24 years and God has blessed us over that time. It was about ten years ago that I began thinking about the 100th anniversary of our firm. Any celebration of that milestone was going to occur on my watch. I really did not think about it a whole lot but had some ideas. More traditional ideas like an open house or cookout. It was in March of 1987 at a cemetery in Neenah, Wisconsin that the light went on. The cemetery in Neenah is full of 100 year old oaks that line the roads creating a beautiful canopy, almost a tunnel. It was obvious to anyone that this was not by chance. Sure enough the trees were planted close to 100 years ago and there is an organization that has preserved and cared for them all these years. That got me thinking - What a wonderful living legacy! Could we do that in Rhinelander? Well I went back and forth with the idea in a general sense, almost gave it up a couple of times, floated the idea with a select group of people, and then got serious about it a few years ago.

Rhinelander at one time was full of Majestic Elm Trees. Because of a couple of unforeseen events which are well documented in the video and later in the media accounts ninety percent of the trees were lost. Elm trees "Green" benefits, which are also documented later, far outweighs other tree

species. This was a great loss to our community. Therefore would it not be nice if we repopulated the Elm tree in Rhinelander?

It just so happened that a distant relation of mine, through marriage, was Dr. David Karnosky who was a world renowned forest geneticist. David had a part in developing the genetics of a disease free Elm tree, The Liberty Elm. Numerous examples of the Liberty Elm, at different stages of growth are also present at the Rhinelander Country Club. David also was responsible for them and their treatment over the years, and he was successful in saving some of the old trees. Well, then David died suddenly. After his services his wife had me contact the Liberty Elm people to purchase some elms for a memorial at the Country Club in David's honor. That was the call that verified the probability of this project working. That phone call started a project that was truly, I feel, meant to be. The comments that follow in this presentation will verify that. It was the most satisfying project I and many others have ever been involved in. It so far exceeded any of our expectations. The participation, support and gratitude was beyond belief. It is still mentioned to all of us on a daily basis.

Saying you're going to do something and actually doing it are two different things. We not only had to get the trees, we had to figure out how to plant them, where to plant them and how to care for them. Once the word was out, the City of Rhinelander, the Oneida County Land office, the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Urban forester and the Governor's office, "called us" to see how they could help! How great is that in today's world. Figuring out where to put 10 trees and keep everybody happy is hard enough let alone 100. Remember these trees can live 150 years and reach heights of over 100 feet, and that is a lot of planning for power lines, future expansion, roadways, etc. All of this had to be considered. To all of their credit, we have heard nothing but good about the placement of all the trees.

We first had to get the trees. We worked with the Liberty Tree Association and they provided the 100 trees at a cost of \$5,000.00 or \$50.00 a tree. They also provided the two special school presentations which is documented in its own area later. Secondly, where do we put them? This involved working with the city of Rhinelander, Oneida County and the State of Wisconsin as was mentioned earlier. We had to make sure the species was alright to bring into our area; no bugs, diseases etc. We had to make sure they were in places that helped guarantee their survival. We also wanted to spread them out over a large area and use this opportunity to beautify and highlight certain areas of our community. The ABC's of all this is documented later.

Next, how do we plant 100 trees? We decided to ask the usual suspects to assist us; The Lions, Rotarians, Kiwanis, etc. We had started with about 10 groups we had contacted and ended with 35 different organizations. We had groups calling us asking to be included. The outpouring of support from our community and others was overwhelming. We have documented each group, their involvement and the specifics of the help they provided and finally, the benefits they themselves received. The stories from each group are well worth the time to read.

Prior to the planting we daily received calls from individuals wanting to help. We would be outside our house on the lawn and people would stop and ask us how they could help. One call stands out "I am a 85 year old women, who lives by Hodag Park, is it going to be too strenuous for me to help?" She ended up going with some children and their moms and planted two trees at a local school. (the pictures follow)

Besides the addition of 100 Elm trees to our community, each and every group that participated realized a benefit to their organization. As you read their stories you will see that "this was meant to be". So many things came together just perfectly. I and many others would welcome the opportunity to elaborate on what this project meant to all of them. There is no way we could touch on everything in

This has meant so much to us. The "Carlson Elms" as they are now known has been a defining moment for our community, family and funeral home. The benefits to our family and funeral home are too many to list. As a small example we now are on Facebook for the first time! (Give us a break- we just the internet last week) We had the opportunity to meet and work with so many people and groups and tell them our story. So many people now know the history of our funeral home and how we do things. We made so many lasting friendships, as did my children. So many will always be able to look at these majestic trees and tell their children and grandchildren their story of May 18th, 2013 and how they had a part in it.

There is much more that I want to say. Please take the time to look at all the pictures, videos, comments, documentations, proclamations, technicalities, media coverage, benefits and "joy" that came from this project. We have tried to present this to you in a fashion/format that would allow our fellow professionals the opportunity to do this themselves. You won't be sorry!

Please also pay close attention to not only the schools special programs but also the area titled "A Special Day" I have also reserved a special section to thank my family.

As mentioned earlier, the Pursuit of Excellence was not the reason for this project. Honoring the kindness shown us by this community for 100 years was the main reason. However, to have all these things come together at once, makes this so much more special. The Pursuit of Excellence does make you go the extra mile and if this project inspires others to do the same, so many people will benefit. Your family, your community and you funeral home will forever be changed for the good.

A project such as this and participation in the Pursuit of Excellence is a lot of work. But it is worth it for you, your family and our profession as a whole. Thank you so much for your time!!!!

this essay. All I can ask is that you also read the personal experiences they put on their registration cards. You couldn't make some of these things up. Of all of the benefits received beyond the lasting beautification of our community, this project will fulfill the requirements for the City of Rhinelander to be designated a Tree City, USA of their concerns. Our entire community will benefit from that designation and it will come with no cost to the taxpayers because of this gift. The bottom line is we had 35 organizations, 10 government agencies, city, county and state, all working together for a common goal. On the day of planting, a Saturday in May, we had over 100 people spending their morning planting these trees. The ages spanned eight decades from four to eighty five. They planted 100 Elms in one and a half hours. As is said "Many hands make little work".

Where do we go from here? First and foremost, we need to insure the success of these trees. After the planting we took steps to protect each tree. After each storm and windy day, you can find my children driving around "checking the trees". After two to three years of pretty dry conditions in our area we have received record rainfalls for the month of June. We have to make it a year to really guarantee the trees succeed. At this point they all look great. To illustrate the attention this project got, one day while checking the trees my daughter Katie caught residents of a senior home out in Hodag Park selecting which tree each of them was going to water. How neat is that? The Master Gardeners have already planned a pruning schedule for the next two years. All records of this tree project will be placed in a time capsule on the Oneida County Courthouse lawn, to be opened 100 years from now. The Oneida County Land office, the City of Rhinelander, Nicolet College, and the Surveying Club are taking each tree and giving it its own web presence on the internet. The complete history of that tree including who planted it on what date, personal observations and any memorialization will be available to anyone going forward. We have also been contacted by numerous groups and individuals who want to do this again in two years. We cannot go anywhere without hearing about the trees, and let me repeat, not "one" bad comment.

Our Community

Rhineland is located in Northern Wisconsin and is home to about 8,000 residents. It is a small community with a rich footprint. It is situated in Oneida County and has over 1,400 lakes within a 15 mile radius of town. The Wisconsin River also flows through Rhineland and eventually into the Mississippi River. Rhineland is a heavily forested area. It is the forests that provide jobs for many of our citizens. The forests and lakes are popular with many tourists throughout the world.

Before Rhineland got its name it was known as Pelican Rapids, named by early settlers that inhabited the area. Around 1870 Anderson W Brown and Anson P Vaughn had traveled up the Wisconsin River in order to find timber. They felt that this would be an excellent location to build a mill town where they could use the Wisconsin River to power the lumber mill. Eventually the land was purchased from the federal government and it became the town of Rhineland, named after Frederic W. Rhineland, who was the president of the Milwaukee, Lake Shore and Western Road Railroad during that time period. Due to this new business venture the Brown family did a lot of negotiating to extend the railroads to the Rhineland area, still here today due to their commitment and determination to make Rhineland a mill town. It took over ten years to accomplish, but finally in 1882 the Brown family received their railroad for exchange of half of their land holdings in the area. Rhineland was off and running!

Why all this about the Brown family! The Brown family also played a huge part with the beginnings of Carlson Funeral Home. It was the Brown family that was not happy with the providers of funeral services in Rhinelander at that time. It was then the Brown family that spoke to a young August Carlson, my great grandfather, about going into the Funeral profession. They sent my Grandfather Rudolph to school on their dime and financed the new building. Five generations and 101 years later Carlson Funeral Home is still in existence, just a block from where it was first started. In fact the fourth and fifth generation of our family lives in one of the Brown family homes which was built well over 100 years ago.

Rhinelander is often referred to as the "Home of the Hodag." The Hodag was discovered in 1893 by a group of people who had supposedly captured this scary creature. A local newspaper described it as having "the head of a frog, the grinning face of a giant elephant, thick short legs set off by huge claws, the back of a dinosaur, and a long tail with spears at the end". The Hodag has become the symbol of Rhinelander. The Hodag can be found on every corner of the globe. I can say for most people in this community that we are proud to be a Hodag. A large Hodag greets all visitors entering the city limits of Rhinelander.

Rhinelander is home a good public school system, along with two private schools, Zion Lutheran School and Nativity Catholic School. Rhinelander. Rhinelander also gives students the opportunity to continue their education further without having to leave home. Nicolet Area Technical College is located in Rhinelander and is a two year community college. Many students that go through Nicolet are able to find careers located in town, or at least very close, which makes Nicolet a great option for many

students. They also offer the easy enter program into the UW system.

Situated on the Wisconsin River in Rhinelander is the paper mill. It has provided a good income for generations of some of Rhinelander's families. Other industries calling Rhinelander home are Printpak, Lakeshore, ABS, Foster and Smith. Etc. The Rhinelander area is home to many churches but has a main base of Protestant and Catholic families. You can also find many opportunities to be of service to others in Rhinelander, whether it be through the many churches and also service clubs that call Rhinelander home.

Rhinelander is also a top vacation destination for many people from all over the world. It offers fishing, camping, boating, golfing, biking, shopping and a lot more during the summer months. We are a "destination" spot in the United States for fall colors.

Winter activities include ice fishing, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing just to name a few. Rhinelander has often been called the capitol of the Northwoods, due to its many opportunities and things to do, whether indoors or outdoors. Throughout the year you can find fishing tournaments, on the ice or in a boat, along with snowmobile races in winter and summer, even on some of the lakes. Northwoods golf course is known for its challenging 18 holes cut right out of the middle of a forest as are many of the areas bicycle and ski trails. Rhinelander is very easy to get to by car or plane. We are home to the Rhinelander -Oneida County Airport, which allows easy access to Chicago and Minneapolis with daily jet service. Rhinelander offers many different lodging opportunities. There are many hotels and numerous resorts that surround the area. Many of them are located on the lakes in and around Rhinelander.

When my Great Grandfather August decided to stay in Rhinelander, it was good for all of us. The people of this community have been very kind to our family throughout the 101 years we have been in business. I can only hope that they feel we have been the same.

Rhinelander is a beautiful community that provides an abundance of opportunities. It has grown throughout the years due to the efforts of the community and the desire of many to live here in the Northwoods. Whether people come here for vacation or for a career path, Rhinelander is a great place to be!

Elm Tree Facts

- Trees add not only beauty but value to our property. The value of mature elm for insurance purposes is \$2500.
- The 7,700,000 elm trees in urban centers in North America have a combined value of over \$19 billion.
- Dutch elm disease got its name because it was discovered by scientists in Holland in 1917.
- The seven Dutch scientists who first identified Dutch elm disease were all women.
- The elm population dropped from 77 million to 34 million by 1976
- Fully mature elm trees can live as long as 300 years.
- The cooling effect of one urban elm tree is equivalent to five air conditioning units.
- North America settlers named the elm “the lady of the forest”.
- The American Elm grows to over 115 feet tall and can have a diameter in excess of ten feet.
- The Iroquois used elm bark to make canoes, rope and utensils
- The film “Nightmare on Elm Street” has absolutely nothing to do with elm trees.

The adjectives “majestic” and “stately” leap to mind when describing elms. These trees are truly one of our most recognizable trees whether lining out streets and boulevards or standing on guard in a farmer’s field. The number of “Elm” streets, parks and buildings demonstrates just how much a part of our lives these trees became.

The majestic elm is one of the most beloved of all our trees. Dutch elm disease has taken its toll and sadly the elm is disappearing from our landscape. But through community action, new research and a concentrated effort, the elm can make a comeback.

Benefits of Carlson Anniversary Elm Project

- Carlson Funeral Home now has a Facebook page.
- Rhinelander School District utilized trees to create and highlight new construction sites at five different school areas.
- All children participating will be able to see the maturation of their trees, knowing they played a part in their planting.
- The City of Rhinelander received a huge “kick start” in their future urban reforestation plan.
- Over 100 individuals were memorialized as trees were registered and dedicated in their name, serving as living memorials for generations to come.
- Ministry St. Mary’s Hospital utilized their allotment of trees to beautify the entrance area to their 10 year old, 60 million dollar hospital.
- Nicolet College Survey Class and GIS Club had the opportunity to participate in a truly unique senior service project that benefited a wide segment of the community by marking GPS locations and mapping for planted trees.
- Forth Floral was able to plant replacements for the 100 year old Maple trees recently removed on their greenhouse and retail site as well as providing a readily visible area for the trees on Rhinelander’s main street.
- Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church honored their Pastor of 28 years, Rev. Norman Peterson, who is retiring later this summer by planting three trees on church property.
- Nativity of Our Lord Catholic Cemetery used their trees to memorialize two former parish priests as well as to mark the entrance to their new cemetery grounds.
- Northwoods Golf Course used a number of trees to highlight four areas bordering the 17th and 18th fairways, which will one day grow to present a substantial challenge as golfers make their finish.
- Northwoods Golf Course used two trees to frame their new flagpole and entrance to their beautiful clubhouse.
- Individual participants created their own family legacy by planting and caring for individual trees. (Please see the comment section from registration cards.)

- St. Augustine Episcopal Church used two trees to highlight the entrance to their newly created Parish Columbarium.
- Downtown Rhinelander Inc. was able to add several new trees to their urban parks located throughout the downtown district.
- Rhinelander Country Club's plantings will provide an arching canopy of elm trees for its half mile entrance. The trees also memorialize 15 members who have died.
- The Rhinelander District Library honored outgoing longtime Foundation President, Linda Davidson by planting an elm in her honor on the library grounds.
- Numerous streets throughout the City of Rhinelander will be home to majestic canopies of elm trees in years to come.
- College student, Carrie Vigo, who produced the DVD version of the project, is using this work as her resume as she applies for a video technician position at WJFW TV 12.
- Hodag Park, a major recreation area in the City of Rhinelander, is now home to 14 new elm trees in hopes to restore the park to its majestic arboreal past.
- Members of local 4-H groups utilized the tree planting as a project to be presented at this year's Oneida County Fair.
- Northwoods Charter School students utilized the project to complete required community service project hours.
- Members of the Rhinelander Master Gardeners used the planting project to meet their yearly public service requirements in order to maintain their Master status.
- 100 trees planted provided the City of Rhinelander its greatest Arbor Day event ever in the city's history.
- While working together on tree planting, members from Downtown Rhinelander, Inc. had the opportunity to chat with representatives from Governor Scott Walker's office about issues unique to downtown revitalization efforts as well as plans for the city's business district.
- Because of the project's successful completion, the City of Rhinelander will earn its national designation as a "Tree City USA".
- Rotary, Lions, and Kiwanis service clubs came together to assist in a project benefiting their entire community as well as had the opportunity to talk and work with prospective members and share their message of community service.

- Katie Carlson, college student and member of the Carlson Funeral Home family, will earn credit for her internship program through the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.
- Members from Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker's office had the opportunity to meet with members from a wide cross section of the Rhinelander community in a relaxed and united format and in turn, share their conversations and observations with the governor directly.

The Trees

There were many details that were involved in setting up this project, from the ordering and shipping of the trees, how to make sure they had enough water, keeping the animals from eating them, and making sure they were planted in places that they wouldn't be cut down.

We did the ordering of the trees from a company out of Keene, NH called the Elm Research Institute. We ordered 100 liberty elm trees that were 4-5ft tall that were sent to Enterprise Wood Products. Along with the 100 trees, the Elm Research Institute gives two 14ft trees that are to be planted at schools in the area. The 4-5ft trees came in individual black pots, which were stacked in a pyramid shape and shrink wrapped together on 2 pallets. The limbs of the larger trees were wrapped in a thick paper, and the base was wrapped in a burlap bag. The trees came directly from Keene, NH on a flatbed truck. Once the trees had arrived they were taken to our garage, unwrapped and placed on our trailer. This was so we could pull them out and water them everyday without having them blow around in the wind. After we had unwrapped all of the trees we took the big trees and planted them at both of the schools with a plaque that signifies the reason they call the trees liberty elms. The bigger trees took a little more to plant because of the 250lb root ball that was at the bottom. We dug the hole, placed the tree in it, and then filled around the sides with dirt and water. After the tree was up and filled we made a berm around the outside to hold the water and placed stakes and two steadying ropes to help the tree until it was established.

We had gone to the City of Rhinelander and asked them if there were places to plant these trees. They not only told us where we could plant them they printed us a 2ft by 4ft map. This map was marked with all the possible planting sites, this took into account the width of the boulevard, power lines, etc. We then went out and stuck flags in the places where we knew the trees were going to be planted. The groups that knew where they wanted to plant them stuck their own flags in the ground. When we did that, the city made sure to get diggers hotline to check all of the tree locations.

For the planting of the smaller trees we sat in the garage of the funeral home for hours on end making individual bags for each of the 100 trees that were given to each individual and group doing the planting. These bags had 3 cartons of DRiWATER, a tree guard, the identification tag for the tree, a form to fill out, directions on planting the tree, and an e-mail address that they could send the pictures to when they were done. The forms were there so that they could fill out who the planters were, what organization they were from, what time they were planted, GPS coordinates for the

trees, any comments they had, and if they had planted the tree in memory of someone. Along with the instructional bags, we also made 100 mulch bags, which were $\frac{3}{4}$ red cedar mulch, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cocoa chips. The bags were to be spread at the base of the tree after the planting was completed. The mulch held the water while the cocoa chips kept the deer away. These were bought from a local garden supply store in Rhinelander. The tree guards we put in the bags were to wrap the trunk of the tree. They are made out of vinyl and wrapped around the trunk, this protects the tree and stretches along with the growth of the tree. When we went to our local gardening supply they had a very small quantity, not even a quarter of what we needed. We then contacted a few companies that were found online but they did not have what we were looking for. We then got in touch with a company out of Minnesota that only really dealt with account holders at their company, but after a few minutes of explaining the program they decided to make an exception. In the next couple days we had all the wraps.

The DRiWATER mentioned above is a company out of California that specializes in hot, and dry climate planting. We were wondering how to make sure the trees were going to get adequate water and came upon this company online. We called the number and explained the project. They were not only extremely helpful with the explanation of their product but they also paid for almost all the shipping from California to Rhinelander. DRiWATER is a gel like substance that holds water and slowly releases it over time. The gel waters for 90 – 120 days, that would take us almost to late fall. The people from DRiWATER sent a brochure that you will see in the attached booklet explaining the product and the intended uses.

The day of the planting was an early morning. We loaded up the trees, the mulch bags, and the DRiWATER bags and headed to the park. We had told everyone to meet at the park underneath the shelter. The night before we put together breakfast made up of muffins, coffee cake, fruit, and coffee which we set up. The trees needed water when they were planted, so we bought and filled buckets up with water so that the trees had that first drink. Once we were all set up we set the trees out in some of the areas where we knew they were going to be planted. Also we set up a demonstration area in the park, where one of the master gardeners, and Eric Eggman of Rhinelander Country Club could demonstrate how to properly plant a tree.

After all the trees were planted and watered we had to make up fencing for the trees because of the deer problem. The fencing was a vinyl coated metal fencing that was green. It came in rolls 5ft tall and 50ft long. We cut the roll down to 7ft pieces and fastened those two ends together with green twist ties. The fencing ended up being 5ft tall and $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft across at the top. After we made the fencing we drove to each tree and placed the fencing over the top of the tree. We then put 3 to 4 lawn staples in the ground to help hold the fencing in place.

After we fenced the trees Devon Vandenhuevel and Molly Towne were kind enough to go with us and mark each tree. After they had done that they put together a map that

shows where each tree is planted in Rhinelander. We are now working on getting the map online so people can see who planted the tree, where exactly it is, and if it was planted in memory of someone just by dragging the mouse over it. Also we are planning to do this again, and adding those trees to the existing map would be easy. There are a few of the maps in the attached booklet which show an aerial photo, and the streets.

We have continually been checking on the trees for a few months now 2-3 times a week. They are doing great and the continued care of the trees will be from the Master Gardeners and our family here in Rhinelander. The trees will have to be pruned in the coming years and being trained in the proper pruning methods the Master Gardeners have happily volunteered.

A SPECIAL DAY

The Rhinelander-Oneida County Airport is the pride and joy of Rhinelander and the surrounding area. It is a beautiful facility that is the envy of many communities much larger than ours. It was always our intention to plant eight trees lining the tarmac, greeting visitors to Rhinelander for decades to come, knowing that a gift from Carlson Funeral Home would grace this prominent space in our community. Little did we know that the joy would not be from the result of the effort, but the effort itself.

Mr. Joseph Brauer is the Director of the airport and has done a great job keeping this airport viable in today's world. He is well respected in our community. Joe is also a board member for Headwaters Inc. which is a not-for-profit transitional community. It has been in existence since 1969 with over 40 years of experience. Headwaters is dedicated to helping those in need including those with intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, chronically mentally ill, and children with disabilities. Through their many outcome programs they are able to set goals and help to improve an individual plan through their "Informed Choice" program, which is their core for all of the programs.

It was Joe who asked if the people of Headwaters could be involved with the elm tree planting. Of course they can! Secondly, can they plant the airport trees and have their own day? Of course they can! We scheduled the event for Monday, May 20th at 1:00 p.m. and a lot of people made this a very special day.

Joe organized the people of Headwaters. We prepared all the equipment, planting materials and the trees so everything was in place. We made a picnic of juices, lemonade and homemade cookies; chocolate chip, peanut butter and snicker-doodles. The ABC and Fox TV stations came from Wausau (60 miles away) to record the event. At 12:50 p.m. the bus arrived.

What followed were instructions on planting, the planting, interviews, pictures, and treats. Oh, but it was so much more! The laughing, joy, competition, anticipation, joking, hoping, pride and love that ensured will forever be a part of all of us. These people can teach all of us a great deal. Their joy and pride in working together for a common goal is something to behold. They care about doing a "good" job.

Each and every person grabbed onto a specific task. We had diggers, waterers, sod removers, tree straighteners, supervisors, and those who would only do TV interviews. Each person did a TV interview, (Dan was a patient man), had their picture taken with their tree and got to have all the treats they wanted. We all kind of got partnered up and the competition was on. Whoever got their trees in first got to be first in line for the

lemonade and cookies. The trees had to be straight though, and Matt was the inspector. Renee also made enough cookies so they could bring some back to their friends and co-workers who were unable to attend.

Present that day were myself, my children, Michael and Katie, Joe Brauer; Director/Manager of Rhinelander Oneida County Airport, Gary Johnson; grounds superintendent of the airport, Dan Griffen from WAOW and the people from Headwaters. It was our intent to tape the whole event, but the event itself became more important. What we did however is take a lot of pictures and some video, as well as WAOW's story. They truly tell the story of the day.

What now? Well we gave ownership of the trees with the airport to those at Headwaters. We made an elaborate scrapbook of the event to present to Headwaters for their records. We then made a personal packet for each individual which included; a picture of them with their tree, a group picture, a card signifying the day, the registration form for their tree and the brass tag from the Liberty Elm nursery in New Hampshire.

When the packets were delivered we found those participating drawing pictures of their trees that "they" had planted, as an artwork project.

So, someday when we hopefully return from destinations unknown, we will be met by those beautiful elm trees. It will be May 20th from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. that I and others will remember however, not that we donated those trees. Words cannot express the joy of that day. Maybe you're not in for the elm project as a whole; it did take a lot of time and money, all well spent by the way. But it would be easy to take ten trees, contact "your local" Headwaters and spend an afternoon beautifying a small part of your community. Say you do this each year. Ten years equals 100 trees, ten days of sincere good will and a lasting legacy for your funeral home for decades to come.

