**Park Department Completes Tree Grant Project**

The Centralia Park Department recently completed a tree removal and replacement project with the assistance of a TRIM Grant from the Missouri Department of Conservation. A total of 19 Ash Trees were removed from the City Square and the south end of the Recreation Park. Problem trees were identified by the Park Department with the assistance of the Department of Conservation. In addition to removing problem Ash trees the Park Department also planted 12 trees of various species in the two locations.

A long term plan of removal and replacement has been developed for both areas of the Parks. A landscape architect completed a tree inventory as well as a detailed plan located all existing trees. The plan identified trees for removal and the location of replacement trees. The plan was developed with the idea of what the mature tree canopy for locations will look like.

The Ash trees are susceptible to the Emerald Ash Borer, which has been confirmed to be in Mid Missouri. The Ash Borer beetle will lay its eggs in the crevices of the Ash trees, when the eggs hatch the larvae will burrow back into the Ash tree to feed until they reach the adult stage and then burrow back out of the tree. This process will end up killing the host tree. Because of the high percentage of mature trees are Ash trees; the Parks will end up with many diseased and dying trees and a much less desirable tree canopy. The trees selected for removal were deemed the least healthy and most vulnerable.

To help insure a healthier tree canopy for the future of the Parks, the trees that are being removed are being replaced with a wider variety of trees that will be more tolerant of any one disease or pest invasion. The Park Department planted the following trees as a part of the TRIM Grant project; 2 American Elm, 2 Tulip Poplar, 4 Skyline Honey Locust, 2 Red Bud, 1 American Fringe Tree and 1 Shumard Oak. As a part of fulfilling the obligations under the TRIM Grant, the Park Department will have to maintain regular care of the trees including, staking, mulching, pruning and watering. The Park Department will also have to replace any of the trees that do not live.

The tree removal and replacement plan will be a multi-year program that will also include tree injections for the Ash trees that are healthy enough to absorb the pesticides necessary to combat the Ash Borer.

This year’s TRIM Grant is funded 75% by the Department of Conservation and 25% by the Park Department. The DOC contribution will not exceed $10,000.00. If you have any questions about this project please contact the Park Department.