



## Wisconsin Arborists Meet TREE Fund Challenge

by Laura Wyatt TREE Fund Liaison

Congratulations to members and friends of WAA for helping our chapter meet the 2008 TREE Fund Chapter Challenge at the Platinum level! As of December 1, 2008, proceeds credited to Wisconsin totaled \$16,947: \$14,227 from Tour des Trees (thanks Dick Rideout, Doug Drysdale and team Wisconsin), \$2,100 from the Raise Your Hand Auction and \$620 from assorted individual and corporate gifts. WAA has met and exceeded the chapter challenge goal at the platinum level every year since the three-tiered program was initiated in 2006.

The Stihl Corporation has graciously donated 500 hand saws to the TREE Fund for fundraising efforts. The saws have been disseminated to each chapter and Wisconsin received 15 saws that will be available for sale for \$30 each at the annual conference. The saw features a 7" fixed blade with impulse-hardened teeth and comfort grip, easily cuts branches up to 5" in diameter and comes with a composite sheath with thumb lock and belt loop. This is a handy tool every arborist should carry for those unexpected pruning opportunities. Support

the TREE Fund while purchasing a great tool!

2008 has been a disastrous year for investments. I am pleased to report the TREE Fund endowment (valued at \$1.2 million in 2007) has been spared! During 2008 the board of trustees began the search for a new investment management partner. After thorough research and interviews the board elected to become affiliated with the Chicago Community Trust. Founded in 1915, the trust manages assets of more than \$1.8 billion. Once an agreement was completed TREE Fund assets were converted to a more liquid form for investment by the trust. While waiting for the regularly scheduled investment period, the floor dropped out of the market. At that point the trust adopted a cautious investment policy and has maintained the TREE Fund endowment funds in secure investments. At some point, when conditions stabilize, the funds will be invested for future growth. While the current interest rate may certainly be conservative, the endowment has not lost principal.