

MSTC Urban Forestry Students Keeping Busy Spreading the Word of Arboriculture

by: Joe Hoffman

The 2005-06 school year at Mid-State Technical College, Wisconsin Rapids, brought many opportunities for students in the Urban Forestry Technician Program to preach what they practice. Students spent considerable amounts of time in the classroom practicing the hands-on skills required in the green industry, and when the chances to share their knowledge with new audiences arose, they jumped.

Last October we hosted approximately 150 high school students from throughout the state for a recruiting event. MSTC students, with industry support from Bartlett, The Care of Trees, Davey, First Choice, St. Croix, and Wachtel, spent the day demonstrating pruning via rope-and-saddle. High school students were bused to a local nursing home where we did some much-needed pruning on a variety of mature trees. This hands-on experience allowed the high school students the opportunity to interact with current MSTC students, recent graduates, and industry professionals. The day's activities also had them learning about careers and tree biology at the MSTC campus.

The Friday after Arbor Day we hosted another 150 high school students. MSTC students, with industry support from Bartlett and The Care of Trees, helped instruct the visitors in a few facets of urban forestry. Hands-on sessions gave students a chance to climb, learn how to make a pruning cut, and use an air spade and sprayer as they learned about plant health care. As well, MSTC students ran the grills and served up over 400 brats, dogs, & burgers!!!

In April we hosted our second Urban Forestry badge for the Woodland Girl Scout Council. Thirty Scouts earned the badge, learning about tree biology, soils, tree identification, invasive species, and

careers from current MSTC female students. The Scouts also completed a community service project, which had them battling buckthorn on campus! We're very excited to have paired up with the Girl Scouts for this wonderful mentoring opportunity!



The Student Society of Arboriculture stepped up this year and took on a great challenge. Throughout the year, hundreds of middle schoolers visited the campus to discover various careers. The SSA students lead all the tours for the Urban Forestry Technician Program, sharing their backgrounds and why they enjoy their educational and career choices. They did such a fine job that they received many compliments on their professionalism... often times middle school teachers noted how the students did a better job communicating with the visitors than other college instructors!!!

Occasions to interact with the public are great for career and professional development. They also afford opportunities to educate the public about the need for tree care, and of the great demand for employees in the industry. The students at MSTC did a fine job this year spreading the word to well over 500 young men and women...our future MSTC students, and your future employees and customers!