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News Release

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Hoosier Heartland Begins Project to Plant a Million Trees in Central Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS, IN – As part of its GROW Initiative, the Hoosier Heartland announced its focus project, *Plant A Million*. This project's goal is to plant one million trees in central Indiana. The current canopy is approximately 16% while the recommended cover rate for livable, sustainable communities is over twice that. *Plant A Million* will not only increase the canopy but also improve the community's quality of life.

Trees are indicators of a community's health. The greater the tree cover and the less the impervious surface, the more ecosystem services are produced. These include reduced storm water runoff, increased air and water quality, storage and sequestration of atmospheric carbon and reduced energy consumption due to direct shading of buildings.

This project is particularly important considering central Indiana includes two of the fastest growing counties in the nation (Hendricks and Hamilton). Development and urban sprawl are happening at an alarming rate. We have less parks, green space, and tree canopy cover than most comparable major metropolitan areas in the country.

Hoosier Heartland, a nonprofit organization of volunteers, will partner with the ten Soil and Water Conservation Districts in central Indiana, as well as other like-minded organizations and local businesses to make this project happen. Since 1969, Hoosier Heartland has successfully carried out over 500 projects to improve the quality of life in central Indiana.

Plant A Million will be the theme of Hoosier Heartland's GROW Initiative Banquet held on August 28th. Kevin Gregory, Chief Meteorologist RTV6, will be the Master of Ceremonies. For ticket information, contact the Hoosier Heartland RC&D office at (317) 290-3250.

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