

## Media Release

October 31, 2019

Contact:

Josh Armstrong, President

Downtown Evansville Economic Improvement District

812.499.9173

### TREE MITIGATION PROJECT ENHANCES GATEWAY INTO DOWNTOWN EVANSVILLE

*Sixty-two trees planted along Fulton Ave. from Lloyd Expressway to Riverside Drive*

The Downtown Evansville Economic Improvement District (EID), in partnership with the Evansville Water and Sewer Utility and Keep Evansville Beautiful, today announced the completion of a newly landscaped entry into Downtown Evansville. Sixty-two trees have been planted along Fulton Avenue between the Pigeon Creek Greenway Passage and the existing fence at the Mulzer Crushed Stone gravel yard. The landscaping project continues south along Fulton Avenue, from the intersection at NW 2nd Street/Ohio Street, ending near the curve where Fulton becomes Riverside Drive.

“Almost 20,000 vehicles cross this point and hundreds use the Greenway through this area daily,” said EID President Josh Armstrong. “We know that beautifying this space will create positive impressions of Downtown Evansville for residents, workers, visitors and commuters alike. The landscape area will frame views of Evansville’s historic LST 325 tank landing ship and the new LST Visitors Center as well.”

The Evansville Water and Sewer Utility (EWSU) construction in Sunset Park plays a role in this enhancement of Downtown Evansville. The City of Evansville’s Tree Advisory Board requires the utility to plant two trees for each single tree removed as part of construction projects related to the EWSU Renew Evansville program, the city’s response to a federal mandate to dramatically reduce combined sewer overflow discharges into the Ohio River. For the past two years, Keep Evansville Beautiful (KEB) has been working with the Utility to mitigate trees removed during utility construction. KEB will water and maintain the trees for a period of two years to ensure their long-term success.

“Keep Evansville Beautiful has been a great partner to work with in making our region more attractive to residents and visitors to the downtown area, and we look forward to expanding our collaboration through the efforts of the Economic Improvement District,” said Evansville Water and Sewer Utility Deputy Director Mike Labitzke. “This expanded partnership brings in experts to help us adhere to the tree mitigation requirements set by the Tree Advisory Board, while allowing our project contractors to focus on their core competencies of building utility infrastructure. In the end, we get tree experts mitigating trees at a lower cost than our prime contractor would charge.”

“While tree mitigation is required, the EID has leveraged our rate-payers’ assessments to create a more landscaped approach for this entry into Downtown Evansville,” said Armstrong. The project includes multiple species of deciduous and evergreen trees, ground prep, drainage grading, and fresh mulch. He added, “Upon entering Downtown, people will be greeted by a stand of specimen columnar ginkgo trees, followed by a seasonal display of color, blooms and

leaf forms. Offering our rate-payers an improved gateway by adding features beyond those the mitigation program requires will increase demand to visit, work and live in Downtown Evansville.”

KEB Executive Director Julie Welch said, “This screen with its exceptional trees will bring additional charm to our downtown. It will be a feast for your eyes with the different colors and textures adding more vibrancy to our city.”

#### **About the Evansville Water and Sewer Utility and Renew Evansville:**

Originally constructed as the Evansville Waterworks System, the Evansville Water and Sewer Utility (EWSU) provides high-quality, safe, dependable water and sewer service at rates structured to encourage economic development while managing land and water resources for future generations. EWSU maintains an infrastructure that includes over 800 miles of sewer lines, 1,000 miles of water mains, 6,000 fire hydrants, and more than 68,000 water meters. EWSU serves approximately 63,000 customers in the Evansville metro area and sells water to wholesale customers German Township Water, Gibson Water, The Town of Elberfeld, and the Town of Newburgh, reaching approximately 10,000 more customers.

#### **About the Downtown Evansville Economic Improvement District:**

Following a 2017 petition process of member property owners, the EID was formed in 2018 to provide benefits and services to member properties paid for by a special annual assessment on these properties. The EID builds a more active and inclusive Downtown Evansville. It enhances resident, consumer, investor, work and visitor experiences in Downtown Evansville. In 2019, the EID will lead over \$250,000 in projects which improve the appearance of Downtown, in addition to marketing, advocacy and safety programs.

#### **About the Keep Evansville Beautiful:**

Keep Evansville Beautiful (KEB) was formed in 1972 by business leaders concerned that the appearance of Evansville was crucial to economic development. Since then, KEB has become an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful. Today KEB employs four and enlists the help of hundreds of volunteers who remove litter, weed and clean green spaces and help with beautification projects. Recent years has seen KEB install “Aerial Beauty,” the sculpture at Evansville Regional Airport; multiple gateway welcome signs; hundreds of trees; and, many other projects. The organization continues to remove litter by organizing monthly cleanups throughout the City with Mayor Lloyd Winnecke. KEB provides services for the Downtown Evansville EID, as well as for the Evansville Water and Sewer Utility’s tree mitigation program.