



C A L I F O R N I A

**A R B O R W E E K**

M A R C H 7 - 1 4

**Planning and Promotion Kit**

Brought to you by **ReLEAF**  
CALIFORNIA



Growing happy communities

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# CONTENTS

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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### INTRO

The Benefits of Participation in California Arbor Week.....	3
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### EVENT

Event Ideas.....	4
Plan for Media Attention.....	5
Event Day.....	6
After the Event.....	6
Report Back.....	6
Proclamation.....	7

---

### PROMOTE

Media Contacts.....	9
Media Coverage.....	9
A Picture is worth 1,000 words.....	9
Pitch It.....	10

---

### TOOLS

Media Advisory.....	12
News Release.....	14
Letter-to-the-Editor.....	16
Op-Ed.....	18

## THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION IN CALIFORNIA ARBOR WEEK

### Bringing Attention to Trees: Working Towards Your Goals

The size, reach, and impact of California Arbor Week have expanded remarkably since its inception. It now engages hundreds of volunteers at numerous events across the state. California ReLeaf is committed to the continued growth of California Arbor Week as a campaign that unites our members, cities, businesses, and individuals and draws attention to the value of urban and community forests for building successful, healthy cities and neighborhoods.

### Multiply Your Efforts—California Arbor Week

By tying your local event to the statewide effort, your local impact is recognized and amplified by the greater impact of the group. As you help increase the visibility of California Arbor Week, your organization or city benefits from its combined muscle.

### California ReLeaf Makes It Easy For You

This California Arbor Week planning and promotion kit will help you think through your Arbor Week event(s). From tips on how to get started to post-event evaluations, the tools and information will support your ongoing efforts to present a consistent and compelling image of your organization's value to your stakeholders through California Arbor Week.

Remember there isn't a "one size fits all" solution. The event ideas, planning tips and media relations advice will all be more effective if you tailor them to your organization's and community's specific needs.

### Reporting back to California ReLeaf

When your event is over, California ReLeaf asks that you report back the details of your event. By gathering information on individual events, California ReLeaf will be able to unify California Arbor Week as a statewide initiative. A reporting form will be emailed out to all participants and is available at [arborweek.org](http://arborweek.org).

The following items can be downloaded at [arborweek.org](http://arborweek.org):

- Media Advisory Template
- Press Release Template
- Letter to the Editor Template
- Op-Ed Template
- Sample Proclamation
- California Arbor Week logo
- Banner design
- Web banner
- Brochure

## THE EVENT

### Begin With the End in Mind

It takes time to arrange a quality event that showcases your organization's accomplishments and involves your partners and the community. Once you decide what to do, identify the team and determine a goal – putting your event together could be more fun and a lot easier than you might expect.

### Choose Your Activity

What kind of activity are you planning? A tree-planting event can also be a fund-raising event, a social or educational activity, and/or help recruit more and future volunteers. Brainstorm, assess your needs and resources, and decide what type of event would best meet your organization's and community's goals.

## EVENT IDEAS

Here are some ideas for staging a successful California Arbor Week event. Event ideas are organized by short-term planning events and long-term planning events. For additional ideas you might also check out the websites of other Network members available at [www.californiareleaf.org/find-a-local-organization](http://www.californiareleaf.org/find-a-local-organization).

### Short-term planning

- Hold a tree planting event. If funds are available, consider having a banner, T-shirts, literature, an interesting speaker, refreshments, music, decorations—whatever it takes to draw extra attention to what you are doing. At [arborweek.org](http://arborweek.org) we've provided you with a designed banner, brochure, web graphic and logo you can use for free!
  - o If a California Arbor Week poster contest winner is in your area, invite them to your event to autograph copies of their winning poster or incorporate them into your event program somehow.
  - o Partner with a provider of affordable housing and plant trees at a site where they are building or rehabilitating homes.
- Partner with a local nursery to sell trees at a discounted price or provide coupons toward trees and/or planting supplies that can be distributed at your event. It may be possible to hold a tree education event at the local nursery.
- Give presentations to local community groups during California Arbor Week. Contact local homeowners associations, neighborhood associations, gardening groups, etc. and ask if you or an Arborist or Master Gardener can talk to the group in honor of Arbor Week. These meetings can be a great opportunity to publicize your official event and/or raise awareness about your organization.
- Take a hike. Invite as many groups and individuals as you can and lead them on a hike through your neighborhood, community or park. Stage a contest to see who can identify the most trees. Have someone lead the hike who can talk about the trees, birds and other aspects of the ecosystem.
- Landscape the grounds of a school, a place of worship, a convalescent home or the yard of a person who can't afford to do landscaping.
- Give recognition to someone who has done an exceptional job of landscaping their property (private or commercial) with trees or a business/individual that has donated trees, time or other services to your cause- not necessarily the organization itself.

- Host a community-wide visioning session where people can come together to create a vision for their community forest.

## Long-term Planning

- Create a commemorative park. Find a vacant lot or other under-utilized area where people could sponsor tree plantings in commemoration of their loved ones. Dedicate the park during California Arbor Week.
- Host a tree-hugging competition to raise awareness. A tree hugging competition could be a competition where the winner is the last person hugging a tree and they win a large donated prize. If the prize is big enough, this could go on for hours- or days. Make sure you are prepared to staff and you have permission to be at the competition site overnight. You'll want to require participants to pre-register and make sure the rules are clearly outlined and available.
- Organize an Arbor Week Run or walk. This can be a lot of work to organize but if successful, it could generate a lot of exposure and fundraising. Small runs can be held at a local track and field, participants can get solicit sponsors to pay based on the distance or time a runner is on the track. Larger runs could be a competitive run along a tree lined route. Runners will appreciate the shade.
- Invite a congressional representative or community leader to deliver the keynote address. (Remember, if their participation is key to your event, be willing to change the event day/time.)
- Sponsor a contest: an art contest, photo contest or essay contest can draw attention to your work and inspire people to participate in your activities.
- Host a "Tea under the Trees" event. You can sell tickets to the event as a fundraiser or make it open to the public. It can be an education event featuring various speakers on the topic of trees in your community or a tree planting event. Serve tea and let attendees mingle while sipping tea and munching on tea sandwiches.

## Plan for Media Attention

As you plan for your California Arbor Week event, consider how your event can help you get media coverage for California Arbor Week and your organization. If you want to increase your chances for television coverage, consider the following when you're planning:

- Time. If your local news stations have a live morning broadcast, hold your event during the live broadcast. Otherwise, hold your event after 10 a.m. (after the morning planning meeting) and before 2 p.m.(so they have enough time to edit the story before the evening broadcast).
- Location. Consider how far media will have to travel to cover your event. A shorter travel time will increase your chances of coverage.
- Publicize early. In this kit we've provided a template Letter to the Editor, Op-Ed, Media Advisory and Press Release to help you publicize your event.

## EVENT DAY

All the planning has come together, and it's the big day (or days). Conduct an event walk-through to prepare your volunteers to answer questions, give directions and handle problems. Take pictures of the event for use in your publications and to give as thanks to partners and participants. At the event, be sure to thank all involved.

Create an event checklist for the day of that includes all the documents you want to have on hand, all materials you'll need to bring and all the contact information you'll need on site. Items you'll want to consider including are:

- Copies of the press release, run of show, vendor/speaker contact information
- Tree planting materials
- Banners, brochures, decorations

### Day of Event Tips

- Test the quality of the sound equipment. Recognize and thank all partners.
- Take lots of photographs!
- Assign someone to work with any reporters who show up.

### After the Event

After the trees are planted and the event site is cleaned up, your work isn't quite finished yet. It's important to send out the press release and pictures, upload photos to Facebook or other social mediums while there is still a buzz about the event.

### Post-Event Checklist:

- Distribute press release and photos (with captions identifying people pictured).
- Follow up with the media.
- Post photos to social media sites.
- **Share photographs and copies of media coverage with California ReLeaf and other partners.**
- Thank all participants and sponsors who made your events possible.
- Track media coverage.
- Write a short report that will serve as a reminder for future events.
- Begin to think about next year's California Arbor Week event. Think big and start early!

## Report Back

California ReLeaf wants to hear from you, too! Our goal is to link all the individual California Arbor Week events taking place to one another so the impact is greater statewide. In order to do that, we depend on individual organizations to report back about their events. A reporting form will be sent out to all event participants and is available at [arborweek.org](http://arborweek.org).

Share your pictures, videos and comments on our Facebook page [facebook.com/calreleaf](https://facebook.com/calreleaf) so other individuals can learn about your events and congratulate you on all your efforts!

## PROCLAMATION

Proclamations are a highly effective way to involve your local city council or mayor in your organization's California Arbor Week efforts. A proclamation will record your organizations accomplishments in the records of your town, county or city and alert elected officials to your work. A proclamation does not require a city council vote and is signed by only one person, usually the mayor.

Putting forth a proclamation:

- Send a formal letter to the mayor's office asking if he or she would be interested in signing a proclamation for California Arbor Week.
- Provide information about your organization's programs as well as your plans for California Arbor Week celebrations.
- Follow up with the mayor's office.
- If the mayor agrees to participate, be sure to alert the media and invite your members and partners to the signing. You may be able to have the proclamation signed at your event.



## TEMPLATE: Proclamation



Insert Logo

### California Arbor Week Proclamation

This measure would proclaim the week of March 7<sup>th</sup> – March 14th in each year as California Arbor Week, and would urge [city] residents to observe the week with appropriate tree planting activities and programs.

WHEREAS, Arbor Day is celebrated nationally to encourage Americans to maintain and replenish our country's vast forests, orchards, and woodlands; and

WHEREAS, In California, we also observe Arbor Day starting on the birthday of Luther Burbank, a famed California horticulturalist whose life's labor produced hundreds of plants and trees that have contributed to the natural splendor and food production in our state; and

WHEREAS, California Arbor Week has the involvement of [name of organization]; and

WHEREAS, [name of organization] is improving our community by planting trees and working to improve the quality of life in [city]; and

WHEREAS, Trees are a valuable economic asset in our cities that help maintain or increase property values and attract business and new residents in urban areas; and

WHEREAS, Trees play an important role in energy conservation by modifying temperature extremes with shade and humidity, and are particularly important in reducing the amount of energy consumed in heating and cooling buildings and homes; and

WHEREAS, Trees planted in urban areas play a significant role in meeting the state's greenhouse gas emission reduction targets by sequestering carbon as well as reducing energy consumption; and

WHEREAS, Trees directly contribute to improving California's air quality by reducing air pollution by removing airborne particulates from the atmosphere and helping to purify the air; and

WHEREAS, Trees play a significant role in protecting and purifying California's limited water resources by reducing surface runoff, contributing to storm water management activity and protect urban water resources; and

WHEREAS, Trees provide essential habitat for much of California's wildlife, including many listed, threatened, and endangered species; and

WHEREAS, Trees enhance the aesthetic quality of life in urban communities by providing a natural buffer for surface noise and natural recreational resource for California's children and at-risk youth;

Therefore, I [insert name of Mayor], Mayor of [insert name of city], on behalf of the City Council, do hereby proclaim March 7 through March 14 of each year as

California Arbor Week, and urges all citizens to observe and celebrate the week by planting trees for our own benefit and for the benefit of future generations.

In testimony thereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the city seal of [City] on this [date].

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Mayor



## PROMOTING YOUR EVENT

California Arbor Week provides an excellent opportunity to work with the media to raise awareness and highlight the accomplishments of your organization. We've provided template documents and tips for working with the media to make it even easier. But remember, even with templates, the more you can customize the materials you give to the media to make them local and relevant the more likely they will be picked up.

Don't forget to add the California Arbor Week logo to your promotional efforts. It will tie your event in with the statewide effort.

### Media Contacts

One of the first steps in capturing media coverage is to develop a list of appropriate media contacts. It is very important—identify outlets, reporters and/or editors who cover your location or might be interested in your story. Community newspapers are a reliable source of coverage and appreciate receiving story ideas.

Television and radio stations have assignment desks to receive the majority of media advisories and press releases but there are also producers who influence what stories are covered. Outreach to relevant producers and reporters as well.

### Media Coverage

The following are tips to increase your media coverage:

- Make it newsworthy. Tie the story to a recent local headline, national story or emerging trend. Interesting or surprising statistics lend credibility.
- Reveal secrets. Give away insiders' tips or solve common problems in an innovative way.
- Create a visual. Television especially needs a visual, so think about what would make an interesting segment and convey those visual elements to the station.
- Do the leg work. The less upfront work an outlet needs to do on your story, the more likely they are to cover it. Craft the segment or story for them by providing the visual elements, the important questions and interesting facts and figures upfront.
- Invite a VIP. If you have a local celebrity or elected official coming to your event, promote it with the media. A chance for an interview with the VIP might be enough to bring them to your event.
- Provide a picture. Send a picture out with your media advisory from a similar event to help show that the visual opportunity exists. Send a picture from the event with your news release. Many community papers will run it.
- Designate a spokesperson. Decide in advance who will speak for your organization with the media and make sure that person is prepared. Practice with mock interviews, be succinct and repeat your primary messages.

### A Picture is worth 1,000 words

California Arbor Week offers a great opportunity to capture photos that can be used in a variety of ways. Remember to take pictures of your project area before you begin so that you can later show the project's impact. If your event isn't as visual as you would hope, concentrate on close-up, emotional shots that feature an individual or object with an interesting story. Here are ways you can use your photos:

- To give to the media for coverage.
- To design exhibits and bulletin boards.
- To record the before-and-after appearance of your neighborhood, block or specific homes.
- To illustrate your website, volunteer blogs and social networking sites.
- To illustrate your organization's accomplishments in your annual report.
- To illustrate the statewide effort.

## Pitch It

An effective media pitch can make the difference of getting your event on the 6 p.m. news or in the local paper. Reporters, producers and assignment desk editors' count on you to tell them what newsworthy events are happening in their audiences' community.

Pitching is most commonly done via email and phone calls. It's important to keep any kind of pitch short and to the point. The person you are pitching should know what you're pitching and what angle you're proposing for the story within 30 seconds.

## Remember when pitching

- Know the reporter and media outlet before you call.
- Have an intriguing lead.
- Keep it short, get to the point.
- Communicate why your story would be of interest to readers or viewers.
- Pitch a specific reporter/producer a couple weeks in advance so the story is on their radar. You will likely need to follow-up as it gets closer.

If you don't receive a response to an email pitch (assignment desks rarely email back), it's important to take your pitch to the phone. Always prepare for the call with ready access to all event details, benefits to audience and memorized key points.

Always ask if it is a good time to talk; if not, ask for a better time and make sure you call back when agreed. If the reporter wants to do a story or cover the event, say thank you, find out when it will be covered and offer to make photo and/or interview arrangements. If the reporter is not interested, ask if another reporter would be better suited for your topic.

## Sample Script for Talking with Reporters by Phone

- Hi. My name is (insert name) and I am the (insert title) at (insert name of organization).
- I emailed you a media advisory on (state when) and wanted to confirm you received it.
- We are having an event (state when) that I think you would be interested in covering.
- Describe event and mention VIP participants.
- This is one of our most important events of the year (or season) and will include many new volunteers who will help to make real improvements in the community.
- The project and people involved would make a great story (with some great visuals for your paper/station).

# PROMOTE

Page 11

- You could also use this as an opportunity to report on the many benefits of planting trees and why urban trees are getting a lot of attention in communities across the country.
- Our event is part of California Arbor Week, a statewide celebration of organizations and/or cities like ours that are doing tree plantings throughout California March 7-14.

One or two days before the event, send out the media advisory once more and then call the same reporter or editor again. Try to confirm whether or not they plan to cover it. If not, let them know you plan on sending them a news release after the event.

Calls confirming event details and any changes can be made the day before and on the morning of the event. Weekend television assignments are often not finalized until the last minute. A weekend TV reporter or camera operator may be covering multiple assignments in a day so try to accommodate their needs for action footage whenever they do show up.

Suggestion: If you want to generate public interest in your California Arbor Week event, pitch a morning show segment for the days prior to the event where an expert arborist gives tips on tree planting, talks about tree varieties, etc. and use the segment to plug your larger event. Pitch it about two weeks before the segment would run.

## MEDIA TOOLS – WHAT IT IS, HOW TO USE IT

### Media Advisory

A media advisory is a brief announcement of an event or press conference that gives information such as the place, date, time and purpose of an event or press conference and whom to contact. This is the media’s first introduction to your event, and it should be interesting, yet concise. Distribute the advisory three to four days prior to your event and then once more the day before your event. Place telephone calls to the assignment editors to ensure that they received your media advisory and ask whether they will cover your event. Use the phone call as your opportunity to pitch the event. Most desks won’t confirm that they’ll be at your event or not. Be prepared for media to show even if no one confirms.

Page 12 Explore community bulletin boards as well as online media outlets that might pick up your story. Some online news outlets allow you to post your own articles and community events on their calendar. With these online avenues, it’s important to enter various “tags” to optimize your article’s search engine results.

We’ve provided a template advisory but, if you create your own keep, these tips in mind:

- Include information such as the name, phone and fax number of a well-informed contact person.
- Give basic information such as place, date, time, purpose and contact information.
- Limit the media advisory to one page.
- Keep in mind that some media, including magazines and weekly newspapers, will need a longer lead-time than others, perhaps four to six weeks in advance. An email one to two days in advance of your event may also be in order.

## TEMPLATE: Media Advisory



Organization Logo

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT:** Name

Date you send advisory

Title

Cell Phone

### **[Organization] to Plant XX Trees at [location] for California Arbor Week**

**Who:** Name of your organization, elected officials or local celebrities attending.

**What:** [Organization name] is hosting a local tree planting event to celebrate California Arbor week. XX trees will be planted by volunteers including [elected officials, local celebrities,] dedicated volunteers and students.

[Include additional visuals, interview opportunities or compelling factors of your event that would interest the media.]

**Where:** Exact address so reporters can easily locate

**When:** Date and time

**Why:** The purpose of California Arbor Week is to promote the important effects trees have on our lives and our communities. Through collaboration with volunteers, local officials, the support of California ReLeaf and the work of local organizations, California Arbor Week is sure to make a positive impact in the [Insert City] community.

### **Visual and Interview Opportunities Include:**

- [List names and titles of those on site available for an interview and interesting visual opportunities that would create a good story for broadcast media in particular.]

Visit [www.arborweek.org](http://www.arborweek.org) for more information.

###

## News Release

The news release is typically sent out the day of your event or after it is over. Spend some time thinking about the angle and try to make it newsworthy. Write it like a news article. The less work a reporter has to do to make your story print ready, the more likely they are to run your story.

We've provided a template release but, if you create your own, keep these tips in mind:

- Include contact information (name, phone, mobile, fax, email, website) of a well-informed spokesperson.
- Include the basics: who, what, when, where and why—preferably in the lead of your release.
- Include one or two quotes from some with a vested interest in your organization or an expert on the topic.
- Write a catchy headline that is informative.
- Keep it to one page.
- Follow up by telephone, but be mindful of reporters on deadline and ask if they have time to talk before launching into your pitch.
- Send a release immediately after the event, so that you can include photos or important details about the outcome.

## TEMPLATE: News Release



Insert your logo  
here

### PRESS RELEASE

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date

**CONTACT:** Name

Title

Phone

### **[Organization] Plants XX Trees in [City] for California Arbor Week** Events throughout California this week will yield xx new trees in local communities

**[Insert City] , Calif.** – [Number of volunteers/attendees] [organization] volunteers came together today to plant xx donated trees at [specific location], one of many events taking place in celebration of California Arbor Week (March 7-14), a statewide initiative led by California ReLeaf. [Organization name] is a member of California ReLeaf's network of nonprofit and community tree planting groups committed to increasing green spaces in their communities.

"We're glad we could plant these trees today and as a result improve the air quality and tranquility of the area," said [Name, Organization title]. "California Arbor Week is a great opportunity for individuals and organizations to not only plant trees but also raise awareness about the important benefits trees have in our lives and our communities."

In addition to today's event, [organization name] is [explain another event or program your organization is doing]. The public can get involved by [explain ways the public can participate through volunteering or donating money].

"We were fortunate to be able to provide \$XX in funding to organizations this year for urban forestry projects resulting in XX trees planted throughout the state," said Joe Liszewski California ReLeaf executive director. "We work with local organizations like [organization name] that understand the specific urban forestry needs in their communities and help us achieve our ultimate goal to preserve and enhance California's urban and community forests."

California Arbor Week runs March 7-14 every year to mark famed horticulturist Luther Burbank's birthday. This year, legislation was proposed to define California Arbor Week in statute. Visit [www.arborweek.org](http://www.arborweek.org) for more info.

#### **About California ReLeaf**

*California ReLeaf works statewide to promote alliances among community-based groups, individuals, industry, and government agencies, encouraging each to contribute to the livability of our cities and the protection of our environment by planting and caring for trees. The California ReLeaf Network is a state-wide forum for exchange, education, and mutual support for community-based organizations that share the common goals of planting and protecting trees, fostering an ethic of environmental stewardship, and promoting volunteer involvement.*

#### **About [Organization name]**

*[Insert boiler plate for organization]*

###

## Letter-to-the-Editor

Write letters to local newspapers about your organization and your California Arbor Week event(s). If your partners or residents want to write letters, supply them with your fact sheets, brochures and annual report.

We've included a template letter that can be localized for your community. Newspapers will not print a letter that isn't relevant to their readers. Also, if your organization is in the same media market as another organization that might submit the template letter, coordinate with each other so the same newspaper doesn't receive the same letter.

Note: Submission requirements vary. Some have a maximum word limit of 150 to 250 words. Make sure your letter is compliant.

We've provided a template letter but, if you create your own, keep these tips in mind:

- Submitting a letter in response to a recent article could increase your chances of being published. When submitting your letter in this case, add "Re: Article Title" of the article you're responding to.
- Include your full name, address, phone and email when you submit your letter. Papers want to confirm that someone in their circulation area has submitted the letter.
- Answer, clarify or rebut a current news issue.
- Identify your subject, state your position and support your point of view.
- Keep it concise and address the facts.
- Submit online or email your letter to the editorial page editor.





## TEMPLATE: Letter-to-the-Editor

### **Are you planting a tree during California Arbor Week?**

Every year from March 7-14 Californians celebrate Arbor Week by planting trees. This year [local organization] is planting XX trees throughout [city]. I'll be there- will you?

Rarely will you find someone who disagrees with planting more trees. Trees effectively reduce energy bills, increase property values and improve public health. Residents of treelined communities are three times more likely to be physically active and their obesity levels are 40 percent lower. Children have reduced symptoms of attention deficit and hypertension disorder, asthma, and stress when they live in communities surrounded by trees.

The public isn't against trees in [city], they're indifferent, but they shouldn't be. Anyone reading this only has to take five seconds the next time they are at [local tree filled area] to notice how they feel when they're standing amongst the [tree variety]. Are you less stressed? Has your mood improved? Do you like the way you feel? The answers are nearly always, "Yes!"

This Arbor Week and in the months and years to come, we need more support. Communities that work together to plant trees forge bonds that can't be measured through the tons of carbon dioxide removed from the air or increased property value from trees. Plant a tree, you'll see.

If anyone needs help- I'll be there!

## Op-Ed

The op-ed page (so named because it appears opposite the newspaper's editorial page) is usually read by those you most want to reach in the community, including business leaders and policy makers. Of course, that's why placing an op-ed can be so difficult, especially in larger newspapers, but it can be well worth the effort.

Like the Letter to the Editor, if your organization is in the same media market as another organization that might submit the template op-ed, coordinate with each other so the same newspaper doesn't receive the same op-ed.

### Guidelines for op-eds:

- Provide a timely hook. Editors are interested in op-eds that offer a fresh perspective about what is currently in the news.
- Reach out in advance. Don't hesitate to call the editor or op-ed contact before spending too much time on your column. He or she may be able to provide some advice about how to improve your chances for success.
- Consider the author. Your op-ed may be more effective—and more likely to get placed—if it's signed (or co-signed) by a local leader (perhaps someone on your board). You can ask this individual if he or she is willing, and offer to provide our sample op-ed for his or her staff to edit. Consider providing a brief biography of the author.
- An op-ed should be less than 750 words and the shorter the better.
- Use straightforward language, logical, persuasive reasoning and a hopeful tone.
- It is standard practice to offer the op-ed to one publication in a market at a time.
- E-mail the op-ed to the editorial page editor.
- Follow up with a call.



## TEMPLATE: Op-Ed



Insert your  
logo here

### More Than Tree Plantings Come From California Arbor Week

Every year from March 7-14, Californians celebrate Arbor Week by planting and maintaining trees within their communities. This year [local organization] is planting XX trees throughout [city]. We've increased the number of trees we put into the ground during Arbor Week every year since [19XX] but we also want to increase our community's awareness of how beneficial trees are to our communities.

I consider myself lucky to live in such an environmentally friendly state where for many of us trees are a part of our daily lives. Tree planting in California is at an all-time high. Last year, organizations and individuals statewide planted nearly 195,000 trees during Arbor Week. [Local organization] planted XX trees in 2010, more than any previous year. This year, our goal is to plant [total number of trees] more.

Community leaders and contributors from all fields of business understand that trees are important for both practical and aesthetic purposes. Energy companies encourage customers to plant trees to reduce their air conditioning costs. Shop owners located on tree-lined streets tend to see more customers. Realtors understand that large trees can add 10 percent to property value. Tree filled communities tend to be safer, more sociable and healthier for residents.

The majority of the public is not against trees, they're indifferent. But they shouldn't be. Study after study links urban greenery to improved public health: 40 percent fewer people are overweight or obese, residents are three times as likely to be physically active, children have reduced symptoms of attention deficit disorder, hypertension and asthma, and stress levels are lower.

If the intangible benefits to trees in our environment aren't enough evidence, what about the dollars and cents? A study done about trees in the Inland Valley showed that one large tree will provide over \$2,700 in environmental and other benefits over its lifetime. That's a 333-percent return on investment. For 100 large public trees, communities can save over \$190,000 in 40 years.

While our organization does what we can locally, California ReLeaf is leading the statewide effort. Last year, they funded 33 projects with localized organizations that will result in over 23,000 trees planted, and the creation or retention of nearly 200 jobs and job training for scores of young people over the next two years. Because of our partnership with California ReLeaf, when you celebrate California Arbor Week locally, you'll be celebrating with the rest of the state as well.

This California Arbor Week and in the months and years to come, we need more support. Neighbors can come together and help each other plant trees on their property. Volunteers can donate materials or their time to plant trees at local parks or in school play yards. Communities that work together to plant trees forge bonds that can't be measured through the tons of carbon dioxide removed from the air or gallons of rainwater collected by trees. These are the relationships that lead to a greater understanding amongst neighbors and the inner peace that comes from living in a greener community.

[Sign Name, Title, Organization]

Joe Liszewski  
Executive Director, California ReLeaf



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