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\$75,000 grant sought for trees

By Adam Prestridge

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Atmore's beautiful landscape was destroyed when hurricanes Ivan and Dennis' powerful winds uprooted hundreds of trees.

Escambia County senior Ellen Corman and the Atmore Area Chamber of Commerce are working to secure a \$75,000 grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to help replace the trees that were lost.

If made available, the funding would be used to assist in the efforts of re-planting 500 trees in Atmore. Of the trees, 250 would be made available for public or private property use for the public good such as in the parks, around Atmore Community Hospital, outside city hall and several major thoroughfares throughout the city.

The remaining trees would be used for an Adopt-A-Tree campaign.

"Individuals and families can adopt a tree," Corman said. "Once a person agrees that when they get the tree they will take care of it and water it for three years, they get a six-foot tree planted in their yard wherever they want it as long as the tree doesn't interfere with power lines, the sewage system or anything else."

The cost to plant, mulch and stake each tree is approximately \$150. Corman said all expenses are covered by the grant.

"So pretty much when they say they'll take care of the tree for three years, they get \$150 value," Corman said.

The grant also covers the fee for the public use of the trees, so no cost will be incurred on the city.

Corman attended Furman University's Emerging Public Leaders Program this past summer, which inspired her to head up such a huge task.

"Each student that participates has to go back to their community and do a community service project," Corman said. "I decided that I wanted to do something on helping re-plant trees in Atmore and the surrounding areas. I teamed up with Emily Mims, the director of the Chamber of Commerce, and we filled out this grant request."

If the grant is awarded to the city, Corman and Mims plan to kickoff the program at Williams Station Day, which will be held Saturday, Oct. 22 where individuals and

families can register to adopt the trees.

Corman said a list of different trees that the forestry department has recommended would be suitable for Atmore would be supplied.

"You will have a choice," Corman said.

Corman said that plans are to have professional contractors to come in and plant the trees between January and February.

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