



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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More Cherry Trees Coming to Downtown Akron

March 28, 2012 (Akron, Ohio) - Summer-like temperatures in early March triggered an early surprise for Downtown Akron – the blooming of over 400 Japanese Cherry Blossom Trees, which usually flower in mid-April.

“This is one more sign of being a truly international city,” said Akron mayor Don Plusquellic. “In my trips to Hiroshima and Tokyo, I’ve admired the cherry trees that are a symbol of peace in Japan, and I wanted to bring them here.”

During his year as president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors (2004-05), Plusquellic was tapped by the mayor of Hiroshima to be the international Vice President of “Mayors for Peace,” which seeks a commitment from major nations not to target cities for nuclear attack.

In 2011, the City of Akron planted the first phase of the fragrant and pink-blossomed cherry trees along the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath through Downtown Akron.

In 2012, 340 additional cherry trees will be planted through a cooperative agreement with the Japanese Association of Northeast Ohio (JANO), which donated \$1,000 to help the city pay for the plantings.

“The Japanese community in Akron and Northeast Ohio believes this is a way to communicate one traditional aspect of our country’s culture,” said Dr. Fukuo Hashimoto, President of JANO, and Senior Scientist, Process Technology with The Timken Company. “When people see this beautiful display each Spring, we hope they will think of the many ways that Japanese-Americans contribute to the success of our country.” JANO plans to seek additional funds for more trees in the future.

Akron city arborist Bill Hahn has made the planting of the Yoshino, Sargent and Accolade Cherry trees a personal mission to beautify the canal towpath, which was completed through the entire city last November. The trees are located along the Canal between North Street in the Little Cuyahoga River Valley to Thornton Street in South Akron. The first trees were planted last April by Aaron Landscaping at Lock 2 and Lock 3. This week, 180 trees will be planted north of the Route 59 Innerbelt, and south of Lock 1 at Exchange Street.

JANO was established in 1991 as a non-profit association to promote mutual support among Japanese and foster friendship between Japanese and communities in northeast Ohio. Membership is open to anyone interested in Japanese culture. www.janosakura.org .

(Attached to this release are photos of blooming Japanese Cherry Blossom Trees along the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath through Downtown Akron.)

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