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## PRESS RELEASE

### **34th Annual Arbor Day Celebration Kicks Off Parks Department's 20,000 Tree Planting Goal for 2020**

*Apache Corporation, Texas A&M Forest Service, and Trees for Houston partner in yearly celebration.*

HOUSTON – Mayor Sylvester Turner, Apache Corporation, Texas A&M Forest Service, Trees for Houston, and volunteers from across the City will join the Houston Parks and Recreation Department at 8 a.m. **Saturday, Jan. 25, 2020, at T.C. Jester Park 4201 T.C. Jester Park** for the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Arbor Day Tree Planting Celebration. Following the ceremony, partners and volunteers will plant 3,000 trees along the bayou area of T.C. Jester park. The day will also serve as a **kick-off for the Houston Parks and Recreation Department's 20 for 20 initiative to plant 20,000 trees in Houston parks and greenspaces in 2020.**

“More trees mean better health and more attractive communities for every Houstonian,” Mayor Sylvester Turner said. “Research has shown that improving a city’s tree canopy can help fight climate change, clean our air, provide us with clean oxygen, help clean drinking water, cool surface, and air temperatures, and help reduce stress and improve our health.”

“When we steward and improve the City’s Urban Forest, we improve the quality of life for all of us. This effort is one we are committed to. We thank our partners – Apache Corporation, Texas A&M Forest Service, Trees for Houston, and all the wonderful volunteers who for years have shared and supported this annual Arbor Day event,” said Steve Wright, Director, Houston Parks and Recreation Department. “We look forward to their continued support of 20 for 20 and Houston’s urban forest canopy.”

Apache Corporation has been an active partner of the Houston Parks and Recreation Department and its Urban Forestry program since 2007, and continues to support the Urban Forestry program, the annual Arbor Day celebration, and the Tour de Houston Bike Ride, which raises funds for the City’s Reforestation project.

“It’s our pleasure to provide trees for the City of Houston’s annual Arbor Day Celebration. We want to thank the City and the Parks and Recreation Department for our long-term partnership and the many Houstonians volunteering to plant trees and beautify our neighborhoods,” said John J. Christmann IV, Apache’s chief executive officer and president.

The National Arbor Day Foundation, in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and National Association of State Foresters, recognizes the City’s commitment to its urban forest with the official designation once again of Houston as a Tree City USA.

“The City of Houston has celebrated Arbor Day for 34 consecutive years and it is also the 34<sup>th</sup> year of Houston being awarded a Tree City USA designation, one of the longest designated communities in Texas,” said Mickey Merritt with the Texas A&M Forest Service. “This long-term designation shows a commitment to trees and the urban forest by the City of Houston and is reflected by the greenness of the city and the quality of life our residents enjoy.”

Arbor Day is celebrated by cities across the nation, with observances often held on the last Friday in April. Houston holds its annual Arbor Day celebration in January because it offers optimal weather for tree planting in this climate.

*The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages over 37,851 acres of parkland and greenspace for the City of Houston and develops and implements recreational programming for citizens of all abilities. For more information on the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, call (832) 395-7022 or visit [www.houstonparks.org](http://www.houstonparks.org).*