

Over A Half-Million Reasons to Celebrate This Canada Day

25 June 2020

TORONTO, June 25, 2020 /CNW/ - More than 500,000 new trees are growing in honour of Canadian veterans, thanks to the combined efforts of the Highway of Heroes (HOH) Tree Campaign and Forests Ontario. These newly planted seedlings are adding to an existing green tribute along Canada's busiest highway.



Forests Ontario/Highway of Heroes Planting Map (CNW Group/Forests Ontario)

The HOH/Forests Ontario partnership reduces tree planting costs for eligible landowners living near Highway 401, from Windsor to Cornwall. Despite complications brought on by COVID-19, safety precautions were implemented and many conservation authorities, stewardship groups, municipalities, and forestry consultants were able to continue their tree planting operations under this initiative. This spring, 560,712 seedlings were planted on 181 properties, creating 332 hectares of new forest.

"In a time where the world has taken great measures to combat the spread of coronavirus, the Earth has taken this time to heal itself in many ways; tree planting is one way we can help that healing process," said Mike Hurley, Executive Director of the HOH Tree Campaign. "Before this spring planting season, our campaign had funded the planting of approximately 150,000 trees. But now, primarily through our partnership with Forests Ontario, we can say that we've planted nearly 750,000 trees to date. This puts us on track to reach our target of planting two million trees by 2022."

Forests Ontario, a non-profit charity, has facilitated the planting of more than 34 million trees across Canada since 2008.

"We commend our planting partners and tree nurseries that accomplished so much this spring, while ensuring the safety of their operations, in spite of COVID-19," said Rob Keen, Forests Ontario's CEO. "It really is a testament to the passion and dedication these folks have for ensuring a healthy planet for our future."

Along with enhancing the world's largest living tribute, the new forests planted along Highway 401 will provide wind and snow barriers, stabilize soil, absorb groundwater runoff, sequester carbon and provide new habitats for wildlife. Planting forests to sequester carbon is one of the most effective methods to cool landscapes and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Property owners living within 30km of the 401 corridor who are interested in planting trees in the spring of 2021 can visit www.forestsontario.ca or contact:

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(416) 646-1193, ext. 227 or nbaldwin@forestsontario.ca.

About the Highway of Heroes Tree Campaign

When is a tree more than just a tree? The answer is when the tree is part of a memorial to honour Canada's fallen heroes. We are planting 2 million trees for all Canadians that have served during times of conflict since Confederation and including the War of 1812. 117,000 of the most prominent trees will be planted along and near the stretch of the 401 known as the Highway of Heroes, one tree for every life lost while serving in the Canadian Armed Forces. This tribute provides a myriad of environmental benefits and offers an opportunity to tell the story of those that have served in the Armed Forces, reminding future generations of the great debt we owe these courageous Canadians.

The Highway of Heroes Tree Campaign is funded by Veterans Affairs Canada, the Government of Ontario, Mark's Choice, Landscape Ontario, TD Bank, the Ontario Trillium Fund, the City of Toronto, Frank Cowan Company, the City of Quinte West, Tree Canada, Rotary District 7070, Maple Leaves Forever, the Garden Club of Toronto and Canadian citizens nationwide. To learn more, visit www.hohtribute.ca.

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