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# NEWS RELEASE

Jan. 2, 2015 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Dubuque Prepares for Emerald Ash Borer

DUBUQUE, Iowa – Emerald ash borer (EAB) infestations have now been confirmed in 18 Iowa counties and as close to Dubuque as Jo Daviess County, Ill. While infestations of the destructive invasive species have not yet been noted in Dubuque, City staff are developing plans to deal with that eventual discovery and the short- and long-term impacts that will accompany it.

The Dubuque City Council will consider at their Jan. 5 meeting the adoption of a recommended Emerald Ash Borer Readiness Plan, developed by City of Dubuque Park Division Manager Steve Fehsal and City Forester Steve Pregler. The goal of the plan is to identify appropriate and effective actions to be taken in the event that the EAB is discovered within Dubuque's city limits. These actions include prevention, detection, communication, and management activities to minimize the effects of EAB on the City's ash tree population. The plan is expected to evolve as more information becomes available on the EAB and its control.

The 23-page readiness plan introduces a series of action steps to take once EAB is found in Dubuque. It also identifies issues that will need to be addressed, such as city ordinance and policy reviews and updates, inspections of trees on private and public property, public education, contractor licensing, staff education, budgeting, contract agreements, wood utilization options, firewood restrictions, and more. Dubuque's Park and Recreation Commission reviewed the EAB Readiness Plan at their December meeting and unanimously recommended its approval.

The readiness plan also discusses plans to replace City-owned ash trees that are removed or lost. As budget and planting policy guidelines permit, ash trees will be replaced with species appropriate to the site and increase overall species and age diversity of public trees.

The EAB has a one-year life cycle, emerging between May and July. The EAB kills trees relatively quickly and affects North American ash whether healthy or stressed. The EAB deposits eggs on the surface or in cracks of ash tree bark and they hatch in seven to 10 days. The larvae feed on the tree's inner bark and, within several weeks, this feeding creates S-shaped tunnels in the tree's inner bark that wind back and forth, becoming progressively wider. This disrupts the tree's ability to transport water and nutrients, eventually killing the tree. Adult EABs emerge from trees headfirst, creating very small (one-eighth inch diameter) D-shaped exit holes that leave minimal evidence of infestation until the tree's canopy begins to die back. Affected trees quickly decline in the second growing season and are usually dead by the third season.

Ash trees were a "go-to" tree following Dutch elm disease in the 1960s and they were used heavily as a landscape tree throughout Dubuque. A preliminary ash tree survey of Dubuque identified approximately 1,750 City-owned ash trees including street trees, trees in parks and recreation areas, and trees on all other City-owned properties. The inventory does not include ash trees in wooded areas, along park wood lines, undeveloped right of ways, and in roadside ditches and alleys.

City staff have begun to identify declining/stressed City-owned ash trees that will be most susceptible to EAB. Many of these trees will be removed before confirmation of a local infestation. The City is also exploring prevention and treatment options for some healthy, problem-free trees. Due to the expense and frequency of treatments required for preventative treatment, it is not an option for all ash trees and will be reserved for significant, sizable, and otherwise important trees.

The City does not have an inventory of ash trees on private property. It is the responsibility of property owners to follow the regulations and laws pertaining to the disposal of the EAB (if discovered) or the affected tree/wood. Privately owned infested trees are the responsibility of the property owner and will have to be removed in a timely manner in accordance with City Code of Ordinances, which requires property owners to remove and destroy infested trees within a specified period. The City will provide residents with literature, resources, and guidance on various EAB preventative treatments, should they wish to treat their healthy ash trees.

Public outreach will be a key component for the City in managing an EAB infestation. Additional information related to EAB will be communicated to the public as details are finalized and conditions warrant. The readiness plan and other background information are available online at [www.cityofdubuque.org/EAB](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/EAB).

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