Board members work to preserve status.

A canopy of leafy branches create dapples of sun on Lake Avenue and other thoroughfares around Gothenburg.

Late spring and summer, when trees are in full bloom, is when visitors talk most about the beauty of the town.

“After they drive up Lake Avenue, they tells us it’s the most beautiful street they’ve ever seen,” said Diane Trullinger, a member of the city’s Tree Board.

Diane, Nate Baker and Sally Dalrymple were not part of the eight-member tree board when Gothenburg became a Tree City USA community 22 years ago.

But they said they’ll work to insure that the city continues to receive the designation each year.

Tree City USA, established by the Arbor Day Foundation and the National Association of Foresters, means that communities must:

- have a tree board or department
- a tree care ordinance
- a community forestry program with an annual budget of at least $2 per capita. Gothenburg's is $5,000 yearly.
- an Arbor Day observance and proclamation.

To Trullinger, Tree City designation means that residents value trees for their beauty and shade.

Tree Board chair Nate Baker said he thinks many towns wish they had as many trees as Gothenburg.

The city's trees are a result of careful planning, planting and maintenance and encouragment, by the Tree Board, for residents and business owners to plant trees.

A tree rebate program, administered by the Tree Board, offers up to 50% of the homeowner's cost of buying and planting a tree in city right of way.

Residents can also buy a commemorative tree to plant on city property in memory of a loved one. The city supplies a marker by the tree as well as care of the tree.

Board member Sally Dalrymple pointed out that members are also available to educate residents about proper planting and pruning techniques.

"We're encouraged to attend tree care meetings around the state," Dalrymple said.

Each Arbor Day, the board carefully selects and plants several trees throughout the community.

Although members said it's not difficult to attain the four Tree City USA standards each year, they noted that it helps to have local certified arborist Jeff Kennedy on the board.

"He has a good relationship with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and other arborists across the state and guides us through the grant process," Dalrymple said.

Kennedy, who along with Terry Healey were members of the board 22 years ago, said Tree City USA designation helps the city obtain tree and landscape grants.

"It also shows people the dedication Gothenburg has to something—just like its economic success—and says something about us," he said.

Baker noted that the Tree Board receives most of the grant money it applies for each year.

The board must meet four times a year to keep the designation but often meets more to discuss trees and where they should be planted on city property including the cemetery.

For example, board members selected the trees planted by the new directional sign into Gothenburg on the south end of town.

Kennedy said the Tree Board continues to set goals to make sure trees are planted and areas landscaped.

For the most part, Dalrymple and Trullinger said they don't think the citizenry is aware

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