



**Award of Excellence for the Outstanding Professional of 2005
Matt Weaver, Trees for Houston**

Matt Weaver is a man with a Mission - to plant and maintain quality street trees throughout Houston and Harris County. Matt started his career in Houston as a summer intern working with the TreeScape program, a collaborative partnership involving Trees For Houston, The Park People and Scenic Houston.

In 1988, after graduating from Stephen F. Austin with a degree in Forestry, he was hired as the Urban Forester for Trees For Houston. Matt not only increased the number of trees planted and maintained by Trees For Houston, from 3,210 in 1998 – 11,290 in the 2004 planting season; he has also increased the diversity and quality of the species being planted. In 2002, Matt and Trees For Houston celebrated a record-breaking year by planting over 10,000 trees! He is responsible for choosing the sites, overseeing the planting and developing and implementing maintenance strategies for the watering and care of these trees, as well as developing long term contracts with local growers. Over Matt's 8 years with Trees For Houston he has been responsible for the planting and maintenance of over 43,000 trees.

As proof of Matt's ability to coordinate tree planting projects – he was recently confronted with a particularly challenging project; coordinating the planting of 4,170 trees varying in size from 5 to 65 gallons for the 2004 Major League Baseball All-Star Game tree planting project. This project was a result of partnerships between the City of Houston, the Houston Astros, local businesses and Houston nonprofit organizations and the timeline for planting them throughout the downtown area around Minute Maid Park was less than four weeks. Matt was responsible for selecting the sites, species of trees, selection of contractors, monitoring of the plantings and distribution of payments. The ability to plant such a large quantity of trees in a very short period of time while coordinating the efforts of so many groups is a true testament to Matt's communication skills and dedication to greening Houston.

In addition, Matt is an integral part of Trees For Houston's education program. He regularly visits

elementary school campuses throughout Houston presenting programs on the importance and value of the urban forest, he teaches proper planting and pruning techniques at volunteer plantings and workshops scheduled throughout the year and he helps to organize and is a presenter at the Urban ForesTree Keeper classes sponsored by Trees For Houston. Matt is a Past-President of the Houston Area Urban Forestry Council and still maintains a leadership role with the council.

It is safe to say that Matt is critical to the greening America's 4th largest city. Through Matt's leadership Trees For Houston has been able to significantly increase their plantings and visibility in the community. His vision has led to the development of new programs and new systems to better manage TFH and stronger partnerships with government agencies and other non-profit organizations. Matt Weaver's dedication to greening Houston has made a significant and long-term impact on the role of forestry in his city.

And finally, in probably his most significant accomplishment, on September 7th, Matt and his wife Carla became the proud parents of a brand new baby boy, Kie (Kye) Holden.