

## memorial examiner - news

### Planting for the future

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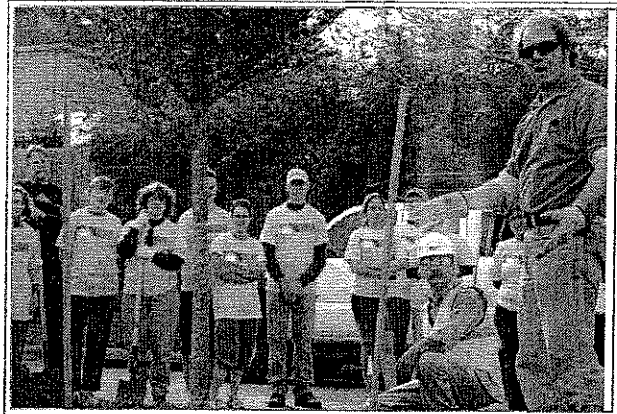
By **RUSTY GRAHAM**

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More than 200 volunteers from BP, Westside High School and the Barker's Landing neighborhood turned out Saturday to plant 158 trees along Grisby Road in West Houston.

BP partnered with Trees for Houston for the project as part of an Arbor Day Houston celebration. BP also donated \$220,000 to Trees for Houston.

Looking at the yellow-shirted volunteers up and down Grisby, busily and cheerfully planting the live oaks and red oaks into pre-dug holes, John Curry, BP director of external affairs couldn't contain his excitement.



Ken Grubb, right, Trees for Houston project director, trains a group of volunteers on how to plant a tree.

"This is amazing," he said. "This is even better than I expected. I knew it would be good, but this is great."

Volunteers, including friends and families of BP employees, gathered at 9 a.m. to hear a brief safety overview and demonstration on proper planting technique from Trees for Houston.

They then fanned out in groups, and after a short exercise period to loosen up, got busy planting the trees.

Grisby Road runs east-west into BP's Westlake campus, where some 8,000 employees work. The road runs behind Barker's Landing, and many of the neighbors were there to help.

Some helped plant trees; others helped with the daycare BP provided inside the campus cafeteria for those too young to participate outside.

Volunteers helped the children with coloring projects that were to be hung along the hallway leading to the cafeteria. They also did a smaller seed planting in the outdoor area by the cafeteria.

"BP's project is the seminal example in the way corporate/non-profit partnerships should work," said Barry Ward, executive director for Trees for Houston. "My hope is that other corporations see the practicality of this type of partnership."

"Planting these trees is part of our overall master plan for continuing to develop the campus," said Yvonne Clay, BP vice president for Westlake Property Management. "We've approached the development of our master plan with the goal of enhancing the surrounding environment and minimizing any impacts."

"All of these new trees stand at least 10-12 feet tall and will have an immediate visual impact in the area," said Ward.

Curry pointed out the same thing Saturday morning.

"People coming in to work on Monday are going to be surprised" driving down Grisby, he said.

The plantings Saturday are part of BP's master campus plan that involves planting a total of 320 trees.

"BP should be commended for doing so much more with this project," Ward said. "For example, instead of clearing out old, mature trees for construction, BP will machine-move dozens of mature oak trees to another location on their campus. And, the \$220,000 donation to Trees for Houston will allow us to buy more trees for planting in other parts of the city."

In addition to planting trees, one of the new buildings on campus, Helios Plaza, will use about 30 percent less energy than a similar-sized conventional building. Clay said.