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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 5/5/17

Unique Tree Contest

Cleveland, Tennessee is celebrating its 25th consecutive year as a Tree City USA.

To help celebrate the occasion, the Cleveland Shade Tree Board held a Most Unique Tree contest. The \$500 prize, sponsored by Check Into Cash, was awarded to Ed and Opal Knight.

Mr. Knight planed a small Red Oak tree from his father's property in the Knights' front yard nearly 50 years ago. Over the decades the tree grew into a thick, twisting specimen with large branches wrapping around it nearly to the ground.

When she read about the city's contest, Ms. Knight entered her tree.

City officials gathered in the Knights' front yard Friday. Will Jones, representing Check Into Cash and a Shade Tree Board member, presented the check.

They also unveiled a new Tree City USA flag with the number 25. Mayor Tom Rowland said the flag will be presented to businessman Allan Jones to fly over the Craigmiles Building downtown.

Mayor Rowland said the city must meet criteria set by the Arbor Day Foundation to be a Tree City USA. Those include having a tree ordinance, a city tree board and an urban forester.

"I think we have a really good example of the tree w were looking for," said Dan Hartman, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director.

Another flag, this one from Cleveland Utilities, was also displayed with the designation Tree Line USA.

Tim Henderson, President and CEO, noted CU has won the distinction for many years, "It's important for utilities to maintain the proper clearance," Henderson told the group. "We do that with purpose and we do that carefully. "

Tree Board member Jo Benjamin complimented the Knight family for allowing their tree to grow with few alterations.

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Shade Tree Board members from left, Amy Banks, Cleveland Utilities President Tim Henderson, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Dan Hartman, City Councilman David May Jr., City Manager Joe Fivas, Jo Benjamin and Mayor Rowland with the latest Tree City flag.



From left, Shade Tree Board members Cleveland Utilities President Tim Henderson, Amy Banks, Jo Benjamin, Dan Hartman, check recipients Opal and Ed Knight and Will Jones.

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The winning tree.