

City urged to prepare for emerald ash borer

(KLZA)--Falls City Tree Board members presented an update to the City Council Monday evening on their recommendations on how to deal with the impending Emerald Ash Borer infestation.

Tree Board member Gerald Hopp said there are about 200 Ash Trees on City terraces and in the parks which are the responsibility of the City.

Hopp said with that many ash trees in the community, not counting trees on private property, it is nearly certain the Emerald Ash Borer will make it's way to Falls City. Doniphan County, Kansas is the closest know location where the borer has been confiremd.

The Tree Board is currently recommending the Ash trees be removed rather than treated. The current philosophy is remove, re-use, re-tree and grind stumps.

Hopp noted the wood from removed trees has a number of uses, including mulch. A city ordinance requires that a tree be replanted for each tree removed from city property.

Tree Board member John VonBehren said the most effective way to treat the trees is by injection. He said even if the treatment is only required every two or three years, they are estimating the cost to average \$100 annually. You must multiply that by the number of Ash Trees you have.

An unknown factor, is how many years will treatment be required to protect the trees. Will it be a 4-year process or a 10-year process which impacts the cots.

For the current year the City budget included \$5,000 to deal with the Ash tree issue. The Tree Board is suggesting that be doubled for the next fiscal year.

VonBehren said waiting to react, once it is known the Emerald Ash Borer has arrived in Falls City, could have a big impact on the City budget. He says the Tree Board is suggesting a slow process to minimize the impact on the City budget. If action is delayed, you might be forced to remove all the trees at one time, affecting both manpower and finances.

It is estimated that it takes two – four years before you see the affects of the Emerald Ash Borer on a tree.

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