

## **Brenda Chavez Wins 2009 Colorado Arbor Day Poster Contest**

Brenda Chavez, daughter of Ramon and Juanita Aguilar, and a fifth-grade student at Greenwood K-8 School in Denver, is the Colorado winner of the 2009 Arbor Day National Poster Contest. More than 2,000 posters, created by fifth-graders throughout Colorado, were submitted for this year's poster contest, and the winner was selected from 56 school finalists.

Chavez' poster was selected by a panel of judges from across the state, including private, municipal and Colorado State Forest Service foresters. The state contest is part of an annual program sponsored by the National Arbor Day Foundation, the Colorado Tree Coalition (CTC) and the Colorado State Forest Service. The theme of this year's contest was *Trees are Terrific...in Cities and Towns!*

On April 13, Chavez was recognized for her accomplishment during a presentation in front of the poster contest display at the Colorado State Capitol. Rep. Terrance Carroll, Speaker of the House, recognized Chavez for her award, and Chavez presented a framed copy of her winning poster depicting a tree-lined city to Rep. Carroll.

In addition to Rep. Carroll, Chavez' parents and Brian Reming, Chavez' art teacher, several other dignitaries were present for the ceremony, including Tom Wells, chairman of the Colorado Tree Coalition (CTC); Douglas Schoch, arboreal inspector with the Division of Forestry for the City of Denver; Ralph Campbell, Community Forestry Division supervisor, Colorado State Forest Service; Keith Wood, staff forester, Colorado State Forest Service; and Donna Davis, Colorado coordinator for the CTC/National Arbor Day Foundation fifth-grade poster contest.

During the ceremony, Chavez commented that she had to compete three times before winning the poster contest — once for the Greenwood School competition, once for the Denver City Forestry Division competition, which included students from 22 schools, and finally the state competition. As the state poster contest winner, Chavez also advanced as a finalist in the national contest; the national winner was announced on National Arbor Day, April 24.

Following the formal presentation ceremony at the capitol, Rep. Carroll had Chavez, her family and teacher escorted into the House Assembly where they were formally introduced and recognized on the floor. Chavez then received a written resolution from Rep. Carroll honoring her for her accomplishment.

After the presentation in front of the House Assembly, Edna Pelzmann, manager of Visitor Services and the Tour Desk, treated Brenda and her guests to a personal tour of the dome and capitol.

Chavez' poster, accompanied by the other 55 posters that competed for the state award, were on display at the capitol from April 6-16, and then were transported to the Bear Creek Nature Center in Colorado Springs where they remained on display until May 1.

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In addition to the recognition ceremony at the Colorado State Capitol, the City of Denver recognized Chavez' accomplishments at a ceremony in front of her entire school. In addition to family members, Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper, representatives from the Denver Forestry Division, Colorado Tree Coalition, Colorado State Forest Service and Project Learning Tree were on hand to celebrate Chavez' award. In addition, Mayor Hickenlooper and the Denver Forestry Division presented Chavez with a framed copy of her poster.

In addition to holding the boasting rights for the state poster contest winner, Greenwood School also was the first school in the metro-Denver area to plant a tree in 2009 as part of Denver's Million Tree Program.

"I hope all Coloradans will join me in congratulating Brenda on her accomplishment," said Davis, who also is the La Junta district forester for the Colorado State Forest Service. "The National Arbor Day Foundation Poster Contest is a great way to engage students in learning about trees and the many unspoken benefits they provide our urban and rural communities, and the quality of the posters exhibited the knowledge of each contestant, which represents the hope of the future.

"One glimpse outside the capitol building, and we could easily see what past and present planners had envisioned – elegant greenery draping our byways and parks – each tree's branch of growth and each season's renewal paralleling our state's vitality, prosperity, energy and future – a reflection of all of us – Colorado's citizens. We look to Brenda and other young people to carry on that tradition," Davis said.

The National Arbor Day Foundation mission is dedicated to tree planting and environmental stewardship; the Colorado Tree Coalition mission is preserving, renewing and enhancing community trees; and the Colorado State Forest Service mission is to provide for the stewardship of forest resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

The fifth-grade Arbor Day Poster Contest Guide will be available in hard-copy or pdf format in mid-August. To obtain a copy, contact Donna Davis at [donna.davis@colostate.edu](mailto:donna.davis@colostate.edu).

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