

TREES: Former mayor on hand to celebrate Arbor Day in Oak Ridge

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Cortese said Scheidt, who is one of his clients, talked to city Recreation and Parks Director Josh Collins about the pruning project, and Collins was all for it.

The work is what Cortese called a class II pruning. "The four classes are set by the National Arborist Association, depending on the degree or intensity of the work to be done," he said. "With class II, we take out a few small branches, up to one inch in diameter. We clean out all the large dead branches, anything greater than two inches in diameter that is dead. We take out the branches that are rubbing together and the diseased branches, anything that is not appropriate for the interior of the tree. With most trees, class II is what you do."

Cortese, who has 17 years in the tree service business, says he never lets one of his employees climb a tree with spikes or gaffs on their boots because they can severely damage the tree. They use chain saws for the bigger limbs, but he said hand saws and pruning saws are sometimes faster and safer on small branches.

"We deal exclusively with residences and parks," he said. "We don't get involved in trimming trees for utility lines."

Scheidt said the children who play in the park "love the trees to death. We were afraid we were going to lose them because of the use impact. The kids have picnics under them all the time."

She said this was one of the first steps in the major renovation of the park. "When the Cedar Hill School was torn down in 1986, the community association fought hard to get a park here. We built the play structure here, and now the Community Design Center has helped us develop a master plan for the park."

Collins said the city would come back to the trees after Cortese finished, and aerate and mulch the area. "We might just make one big mulch bed here," he said. "We want to keep these old trees in good shape and do something about the compacting around them. We may have to move some of the activities here down the hill a little bit."

"The Park Development Fund has \$40,000 budgeted for improvements here, and that will let us implement some of the master plan," he said. "We may build one or two picnic shelters and put in a trail system. We'll do as much as we can with the money we have or with any contributions we get, like what Mr. Cortese is doing."

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