

## **Planters Give Ontario the Gift of 369,473 Trees for 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

*Join Ontario's Green Leaf Challenge to Plant a Tree and Fight Climate Change in 2017*

**Toronto, ON, July 13, 2017** – Forests Ontario thanks the partners, businesses, community groups, schools, families, and individuals who have joined in Ontario's Green Leaf Challenge by planting 369,473 trees to date this year.

This spring, Forests Ontario and the Ontario government invited all Ontarians to participate in the Green Leaf Challenge to celebrate Canada's sesquicentennial.

"Thanks to the enthusiasm of so many, Ontario government's Green Leaf Challenge is celebrating Canada's birthday by creating a green legacy that contributes to our well-being today and supports healthier forests for our future," says Rob Keen, CEO of Forests Ontario. "We are amazed at the momentum the Green Leaf Challenge has already gathered. We encourage everyone to continue to plant trees and help us reach our goal of planting and counting three million trees."

"I want to thank Forests Ontario and the many organizations, businesses, schools and individuals who have put in the hard work and effort to make this initiative a success," says Kathryn McGarry, Ontario Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. "These numbers show the Green Leaf Challenge is off to a good start already and if we keep this momentum up we will easily match the three million trees our government plants every year."

The Green Leaf Challenge will have a significant impact on Ontario's air quality by adding new forest cover to beautify our communities, clean our air, improve local water supplies, establish wildlife habitat and provide a buffer against the effects of climate change across the province for the next 150 years of Canada's history.

We'd like to congratulate and thank our top planters so far in 2017 in various categories:

- **Large Organization:** County of Simcoe – 81,000
- **Small Organization:** County of Renfrew – 30,180
- **Business:** Blake Construction Services – 200
- **Individual:** Dave and Dee – 8,412
- **School:** County of Brant – 1,370

Forests Ontario applauds the thousands of volunteers who joined us at community planting events across the province and thanks our sponsors, Enbridge Gas Distribution and PCL Constructors for their continued support.

The Green Leaf Challenge will run throughout 2017. You can still add your trees to the online counter and learn more about tree planting events and resources in your local area at [greenleafchallenge.ca](http://greenleafchallenge.ca). Join us today to celebrate this milestone year by securing a greener and healthier future for our province.

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The Voice for our Forests

[www.forestsontario.ca](http://www.forestsontario.ca)

### **About Forests Ontario**

Forests Ontario is the voice for our forests. Working to promote a future of healthy forests sustaining healthy people, Forests Ontario is committed to the re-greening of Ontario through tree planting efforts on rural lands and in urban areas, as well as the renewal and stewardship of Ontario's forests through restoration, education and awareness. Visit [www.forestsontario.ca](http://www.forestsontario.ca) or follow us @Forests\_Ontario.

**For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:**

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