

December 15, 2007

Delayed tree-planting project under way

Justina Ly, Staff Writer
More San Pedro

After a two-month delay caused by the October wildfires and hurdles created by city departments, trees have finally been planted as part of the Pacific Avenue tree-planting project.

Weather conditions before, during and after the Dec. 8 planting created ideal conditions for the volunteers and the fledgling trees, said Sue Castillo, a member of the Central San Pedro Neighborhood Council who spearheaded the project. "Because all the rain from the previous day, the soil was loose. When we went to plant, the sun came up bright and nice. Once we finished up, it started sprinkling lightly. The weather couldn't have been better."

About 70 volunteers for the project met at 9 a.m. at the Hope Chapel parking lot in San Pedro.

Volunteers were divided into groups of four to six people and assigned to planting sites located along 26 blocks of Pacific Avenue between Oliver and West 22nd streets.

After four hours of tough, physical labor, 24 trees of four different varieties were planted.

"The volunteers worked very hard," Castillo said.

They planted 12 purple orchids and three golden trumpets, which can both grow up to 30 feet, and six sweetshade and four brisbane box, which can reach up to 40 feet.

All the trees were donated by the Port of Los Angeles. The project was sponsored by the Central and Coastal San Pedro neighborhood councils and jointly funded by

TreePeople, a nonprofit group, the United Voices for Healthier canopy, and the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

The original project called for about 45 trees, but only 24 tree wells were cut more than one month ago by TreePeople, once it realized a street-lighting conduit was an obstruction.

Castillo was concerned the city wouldn't approve of the location of the tree wells or agree to turn off power to the street lighting circuit along Pacific Avenue, but the city agreed and last Saturday's planting was completed without a hitch.

TreePeople will maintain and water the trees for the next few weeks, but local volunteers will eventually be responsible for tree upkeep.

"We are going to take responsibility to get them watered," Castillo said. "We have enough people that are interested in helping."

Her main concern now is to continue the Pacific Avenue Tree Planting project. She hopes to plant an additional 20 trees by March.

"I want to hurry up and continue on before people forget about the process," she said.

justina.ly@dailybreeze.com