



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Maple Trees at Harris Apartments Nominated as Heritage Trees

Hailey Main Street Trees Patterned After 1940's Street Tree Design

(Hailey, Idaho) – The Hailey Tree Committee reviewed a nomination of six trees to its Heritage Tree Program. The nomination, made by Ralph Harris, are of public trees in the sidewalk adjacent to his Main Street property. The Tree Committee, during their March meeting, dubbed the maple trees along the east side of Main Street south of Walnut as Heritage Trees. These beautiful public trees were planted when the adjacent Harris apartments were constructed. Five of the six trees are about the same age planted circa 1940. The sixth maple was replaced after a highway resurfacing project damaged the original tree.

The Harris family came to Hailey in 1881. Ralph's father Charles ran a mortuary and furniture business. His mother Pilar's family came as shepherds from the Basque region of Europe. Charles and Pilar Harris acquired this Main Street property in 1946 and resided in apartment 306, where they remained until Charles passed away in 2007. The Harris's were decidedly active in the community, with Charles being a founding member of the Sawtooth Rangers, and Pilar a founder of the Fall Basque Dinner served each year at St Charles Catholic Church, a well-loved community meal which later morphed into the world-famous Trailing of the Sheep Festival. Ralph Harris, an accomplished artist, writer, and ski instructor of 44 years, has contributed many works of art locally.

“Some twenty years ago, an arborist from Oregon stopped each fall to collect maple seeds from these trees. He was impressed that this variety had survived at this elevation with the low annual rain fall, particularly since minimal and inconsistent hand watering was the norm. He wanted to grow and transplant this variety in other locations. When, in 1967, I returned from Cal State in Long Beach, there were discussions underway at the Hailey Chamber of Commerce of ways to improve the look of Main Street. These maples were one of the major considerations to increase tree development along Main Street.”

Main Street trees increased in importance again in 1994, when the City installed sidewalks the full length of Main Street and included dozens of trees in every block. The Harris Apartment maple trees became the standard by which the other trees were designed within the sidewalk space. These trees dynamically characterize our town with their natural beauty and spirited winter lights.



Ralph describes the uniqueness of these trees:

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