

OPPD Arboretum Background

Mission

Provide an outdoor education area where people can learn the proper selection and planting of trees & shrubs near OPPD's overhead and underground utilities, observe various line clearance tree pruning methods and learn how to use plant materials for energy conservation purposes.

History

OPPD's arboretum is located on the northeast corner of 108th & Blondo at a transmission substation. It includes 10 acres of woodlands and 16 acres of formal planting/turf area. The land used to house Christensen's Dairy Farm.

- Construction of the arboretum lasted five years and was done in five phases, beginning in the fall of 1992 with leveling of the land.
- The first tree and shrub planting took place the fall of 1993.
- Bridge construction and trail blazing through the woodlands was completed in the fall 1994.
- In June of 2001, concrete was poured for the parking area (21 stalls, plus three bus loading zones) and roof fencing was installed.
- May through July of 2002, concrete paths were constructed in the Formal Planting Area.
- March through May of 2003, the orientation structure and a 69-kilovolt transmission line was built, and two acres of native grass and wildflowers were seeded with the help of a grant.
- In June, 2004, the arboretum officially opened to the public. A wetland area was subsequently added.



The arboretum is open from dawn to dusk year-round. No reservations are required for the outdoor classroom or other areas, but use is on a first-come basis. The classroom seats approximately 35. Tours are self-guided.

Additional Facts

The arboretum contains 201 types of shrubs and 208 different species of trees, more than 1,000 plants in total. A wood chip trail covers 1.4 miles. A concrete sidewalk spans more than a half mile. There are eight main educational exhibits with educational panels. They include the Electrical Safety Educational Area, the Formal Planting Area, the Conifer Collection, the Nebraska Native Collection, the Lowland Collection, the Transmission Line Demonstration Area, the Shelterbelt, Wildlife Plantings, and the unmarked American Forests 'Famous Tree Display.'

Costs

The arboretum cost \$500,000 to build, with some additional costs associated with recent projects. The annual maintenance budget includes one part-time employee's salary, \$28,000/year. Approximately \$25,000 is allotted annually for service contracts, including tree and shrub care, mowing supplies, repairs and miscellaneous expenses.

