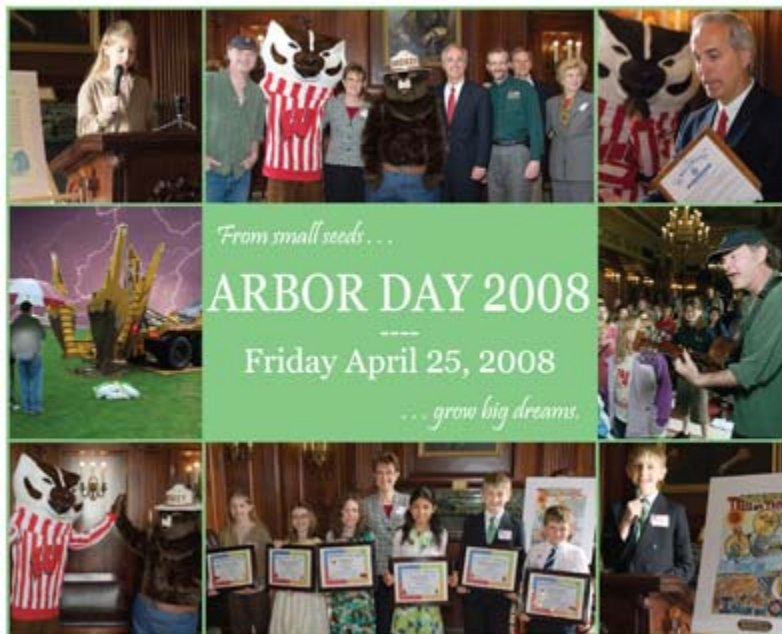


An exciting Arbor Day celebration in Madison

By [Genny Fannucchi](#), forest resource education and awareness specialist

April weather is always somewhat unpredictable, and this year's Arbor Day severe weather forecast for the Madison area, which predicted high winds, possible tornadoes, rain, heat waves and lightning, wasn't particularly encouraging for an outdoor celebration. But as the saying goes, "The show (or more correctly stated, Arbor Day) must go on!"

The cold and damp weather didn't succeed in dampening anyone's enthusiasm. A 15-foot red oak tree donated by the Wisconsin Nursery Association and the Bruce Company of Madison was quickly spade-planted in Capitol Park as 45 school children from Weyauwega Elementary School and more than 50 invited guests were rushed into the State Capitol and led up darkened stairwells to the Senate Parlor for a special indoor celebration. Smokey Bear and Bucky Badger magically awaited the guests, and planting songs echoed through the Capitol. Wisconsin DNR Secretary Matt Frank and the children together proclaimed Wisconsin's 136th annual Arbor Day and marked its 125th continuous year of celebration by the state's school children. Chief State Forester Paul DeLong instructed on tree and forest care.



Photos - clockwise from top left: First place writing contest winner Micaela Jobke; Arbor Day Speakers and Sponsors Ken Lonquist, Bucky Badger, Kathy Swingen (Wisconsin Nursery Association and The Bruce Company of Madison), Smokey Bear, Secretary Matt Frank, Chief State Forester Paul DeLong, Bruce Allison (Allison Tree Care Inc.), and Janine Veto (UW-Foundation, The Wisconsin Tree Legacy Fund); Secretary Matt Frank reads the Arbor Day Proclamation; Musician Ken Lonquist plays a song to the crowd; First place poster contest winner Nathan Schwartz; This year's poster and writing contest winners Micaela Jobke, Isabella Reichardt, Josie Bacon, Kathy Swingen (Wisconsin Nursery Association and The Bruce Company), Hannah Glinski, Nathan Schwartz, and Skyler Fisher; Bucky Badger and Smokey Bear give a high-five; Tree spade planting outside the State Capitol on a stormy Arbor Day.

A private special achievement ceremony followed. Our statewide winners read their poems, discussed their artwork, and were honored with awards by sponsors. Legislators spoke, teachers received scholarships to both LEAF and PLT workshops, and the Office of the Senate sergeant-at-arms provided a private tour of the Capitol.

All in all, it was a memorable day that will definitely burn brighter in time, as these children, their parents, teachers, friends, and loved ones return to watch their Arbor Day trees grow and become part of the great dream of trees that anchor this mission of the heart.