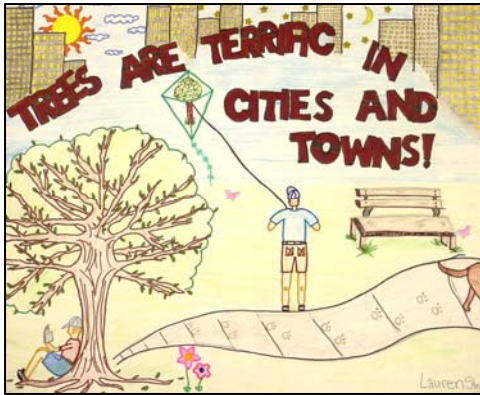


February 24, 2009  
*For Immediate Release*

## Fifth Grade Student Wins Alabama Arbor Day Poster Contest



*Montgomery, Alabama - February 24, 2009* – Lauren Stewart, a fifth grade student at Daphne East Elementary School in Daphne has won the state's 2009 Arbor Day National Poster Contest. She will be presented with \$50 and a one-year AUSA membership for her winning poster, designed around the contest theme "Trees Are Terrific... In Cities and Towns!" Lauren's poster was selected from over 1,200 entries from 45 schools statewide.

Lauren and contest runners up will participate in a tree planting ceremony with Alabama First Lady Patsy Riley on the Capitol grounds on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 pm. She will receive an Arbor Week Proclamation signed by Governor Riley, and she will speak on "The Importance of Arbor Day, and What the Arbor Day Poster Contest Means to Me." The students will be planting a Toomer's Live Oak.

Lauren's poster continues on to the national competition sponsored by The National Arbor Day Foundation and Toyota Motor Corporation. The Alabama competition is sponsored by the Alabama Urban Forestry Association, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Auburn University School of Forestry & Wildlife Sciences, Toyota, Alabama Forestry Association, Alabama Power Company, Davey, Asplundh, and Legacy, Inc.

The national winner will be announced on April 24, 2009, from winners representing 48 states and the District of Columbia. The winner will be a special guest at the annual National Awards celebration held in Nebraska City, the historic hometown of Arbor Day founder J. Sterling Morton.

Two runners-up will also be recognized in the Alabama ceremony. They are: Second Place, Laurie Graves, Hampton Cove Elementary School in Huntsville, and Third Place, Duncan Warner, Cullman Christian School in Cullman. In addition to their cash awards, each student and teacher will receive other prizes provided by contest sponsors. Educational materials are included.

The Arbor Day National Poster Contest is open to fifth grade students in states with a designated contest coordinator. The national contest has been held since 1992 to help promote the importance of Arbor Day and tree planting. Alabama has participated since 1997. More information about the Alabama Arbor Day Poster Contest is available by contacting David West at (256) 237-1621 [www.aces.edu/Calhoun](http://www.aces.edu/Calhoun).