

Tree damaged by Aug. 2 storm spruces up downtown



Record-Eagle/Tessa Lighty

The city's annual Christmas tree is carried down Cass Street on a trailer.

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TRAVERSE CITY — Snowy sprigs of spruce falling to the ground while chainsaws whir — a sign the holiday season is near.

A blue spruce irreparably damaged during an Aug. 2 storm avoided a trip to the mulch pile — at least for a few more weeks — when it was chosen to be Traverse City's Christmas tree.

The spruce, which stood more than 42 feet tall on the lawn of Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District's Career-Tech Center, adopted a 7 or 8 degree lean after the storm, said Brent Boerema, assistant principal of the TBAISD-CTC.

"It was a beautiful tree but it was too big to try and get the roots to get resettled, so we were looking to remove it at some point," he said. "There was no saving that spruce anymore."

That's when Boerema called Lauren Vaughn, the city's parks and recreation superintendent, to see if the listing spruce could serve as this year's Christmas tree.



"We usually get somewhere around 10-15 trees a year that people call in and are wanting to donate and I go out and see which ones are possible," Vaughn said. "It was the best looking and best shape in the size range we hope for, and it helped (TBAISD) out and was the best tree this year."

The tree would eventually be cut down and hauled away, but now it will dazzle with 1,000 to 1,500 large LED bulbs, he said.

Elmer's Crane and Dozer donates equipment to move the tree each year, a process that parks and recreation has perfected.

Workers wrapped the tree in straps then lifted it with an Elmer's crane as another worker cut the trunk.

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