



LAKWOOD

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Lakewood, a Wooded Sanctuary in Minneapolis for 150 years, Is Now Recognized as an Accredited Level 2 Arboretum

MINNEAPOLIS, April 3, 2023 — Lakewood Cemetery is locally loved and nationally acclaimed for its history, art and natural beauty. For more than 150 years, its green spaces have served as quiet places for people to come together to honor, remember and reflect.

Since its founding as a “garden cemetery” in 1871, Lakewood has been distinguished by its commitment to its natural landscape. This excellence is now formally acknowledged in Lakewood’s new designation as an accredited Level 2 Arboretum, the only one in the state of Minnesota. Only the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum (Level 4) ranks higher. The accreditation comes from ArbNet’s Arboretum Accreditation Program, the only international program with a widely recognized set of industry standards for arboreta.

Arboreta are dedicated green spaces where trees and shrubs are intentionally cultivated for scientific and educational purposes, which has long been the case at Lakewood. Lakewood’s 250-acre grounds are home to more than 4,000 trees in a wide variety of species and receive an estimated 10,000 visitors a year.

“Nature is and always has been an absolutely integral part of the Lakewood experience,” explains Lakewood President Chris Makowske. “Our green spaces impart a sense of peace and calm. Visitors tell us that spending time here is uplifting and renewing, whether it’s a family out for a walk on a beautiful spring afternoon or someone who is grieving. Becoming an accredited Arboretum validates this important aspect of our historic legacy and future vision.”

While the Arboretum designation won’t immediately change the visitor experience at Lakewood, it supports the cemetery as it continues to proactively manage its biodiverse tree canopy and plant collections and to expand nature-based educational programming and memorialization offerings.

“As stewards of this ecosystem, we must be vigilant about its care,” notes Lakewood Director of Buildings and Grounds, Paul Aarestad. “In the past year alone, we have added 15 different species of trees to enrich the visitor experience, factoring in the effects of climate change, invasive pests and disease, as well as the lifecycle of each tree.”

Lakewood becoming accredited as an arboretum is just one example of the nonprofit’s attention to the natural environment. Its new Welcome Center, scheduled to open in mid-2024, will have “net zero” energy use, meaning it will produce as much energy as it uses via a



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geothermal mechanical system and a rooftop solar array. These initiatives are designed to make Lakewood more accessible, beautiful and sustainable.

“As life becomes more hectic and complex, the sense of sanctuary that Lakewood provides becomes ever more valuable,” notes Makowske. “People want to reconnect to what’s meaningful, and to life’s natural cycles. We’re responding by creating opportunities to immerse in nature, in our 250-acre arboretum, for both casual visitors and those who choose to be remembered here.”

Lakewood will celebrate the certified Arboretum designation at a special *Sundays at Lakewood* event on April 30, timed to coincide with National Arbor Day on April 28. Free and open to the public, the tree-themed event will take place from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and include family activities like a guided tree tour, free seedlings and adding ribbons to the Living Memory Tree.

Lakewood’s grounds are open to the public 365 days a year. Please visit www.lakewoodcemetery.org for information about events, tours and other opportunities to experience this wooded sanctuary in the city.

About Lakewood

Lakewood is a serene haven in the heart of Minneapolis’s renowned Chain of Lakes — a place to come together to honor, remember and reflect. Since 1871, Lakewood’s 250 acres of urban parkland have served as a community gathering place and a chronicle of our region’s traditions, cultures and people. A history keeper and a thought leader, Lakewood honors its roots as a landmark cemetery while reimagining its role in modern life, through thoughtfully designed events, experiences and spaces.

Today, Lakewood is making memorialization more relevant, accessible and inviting for new audiences and generations, with more creativity and choices. As a nonprofit organization governed by a board of trustees, Lakewood is committed to preserving and enhancing our grounds and architectural treasures, and we use proceeds generated from activities and events for that purpose. We invite you to discover and explore Lakewood for yourself.

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