

TREES COALITION

# Group spruces up roadside areas, green spaces

From staff reports

The **Trees Coalition** is continuing its efforts to improve the Interstate 26 and Highway 29 interchange in Spartanburg County. The nonprofit group educates the community on how to properly maintain and care for roadside areas, trails, parks and green spaces.

Newt Hardie, president and chairman of the Trees Coalition, said the Interstate 26 and Highway 29 interchange work involves saving the landscape trees and improving the appearance or first impression people have coming into the county.

"The improvements are important because the area is a gateway," Hardie said. "We are working under the direction of John Montgomery, who is a civic leader working with the initiative."

Since the Trees Coalition's main focus is to teach how to maintain areas, it does not plant trees in new spaces. Work conducted by the Trees Coalition includes, removing invasive plants such as kudzu and pruning.

The Trees Coalition is an expansion of the Kudzu Coalition, a group that pioneered herbicide-free kudzu removal. It is a mix of volunteers and paid landscapers who train and work alongside neighborhoods, churches and businesses to provide help in caring for their trees.

On Wednesday mornings, the group holds a Volunteer Portal



Pruning is now complete in this second quadrant at the Interstate 26 and Highway 29 intersection. COURTESY OF NEWT HARDIE



The southwest quadrant work is now complete at the Interstate 26 and Highway 29 intersection. COURTESY OF NEWT HARDIE

at Hatcher Garden & Woodland Preserve. The program was developed in partnership with Hatcher Garden. At 8:30 a.m. each week, new and experienced volunteers gather to pull ground ivy until 11 a.m. New volunteers have access to facilities and guidance by experienced Trees Coalition members in a safe, comfortable setting. At the Hatcher Garden volunteer portal experience, the focus is

on having fun removing invasive plants without the heavy work. The group also provides help with identification and removal of invasive plants during the session.

Volunteers are always needed to help with various parts of the group's mission. The group is looking for volunteers who can help with website maintenance, grant writing and Facebook postings. Help also



The southeast quadrant at the Interstate 26 and Highway 29 intersection was cleared out and grass cut in late November. COURTESY OF NEWT HARDIE



The southeast quadrant of the Interstate 26 and Highway 29 intersection was overgrown and each tree was swamped by invasive plants. The Tree Coalition has been working on the project since October. COURTESY OF NEWT HARDIE

is needed with efforts outdoors ranging from easy work consisting of pulling ivy and picking

up trash to strenuous work involving volunteers using chainsaws and hedge trimmers.

For more information, call 864-582-0990 or visit <http://treescoalition.org>.