

Helena Council approves beautification project at city sports complex



By Graham Brooks

[Email the author](#)

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By GRAHAM BROOKS / Staff Writer

HELENA—The Helena City Council has approved a budget request of up to \$5,000 that the Helena Beautification Board will use to develop a unique “Earth-Kind” Conformational Rose Trial in partnership with Texas A&M University at the Helena Sports Complex.

“Earth-Kind” is the trademarked landscape program developed by Texas A&M from research that began in 1992 which is built on the foundation of sustainability. Plants that receive this distinction have been proven to be disease resistant, possess a tolerance of various soil types and drought conditions.

The Helena Beatification Board was approached by the founder of Earth-Kind research Dr. Steven George and partnered with the goal to become the only city to complete a full conformational trial for Earth-Kind roses.

“The beautification board made a recommendation and a request for additional funding in the amount of \$5,000 for us to be a participant in the Texas A&M conformational rose trial to be established here in the city of Helena,” Beautification Board Chairman Chris VanCleave said at the March 27 council meeting. “The funds would be used for site prep and for plant acquisition and signage.”

The area designated for the trial will be the median leading up to the Helena Sports Complex and maintenance for the roses will be minimal. The shrubs will only need to be watered during the first season and there will be no need for fertilizer, pesticides or pruning, cutting or deadheading.

The allocation of the funds for the project includes \$1,600 for 60 plants, \$800 for mulch, \$600 for gravel and \$2,000 for 60 educational signs bringing the total project cost to \$5,000.

The Helena Beautification Board said the benefits of the project include national exposure, recognition as the first Earth-Kind city, no city maintenance, community involvement, education on sustainability, invitation to participate in the Earth-Kind perennial trial and more.

The Helena Beautification Board is an appointed board of the Helena City Council. The Board believes that people and places are profoundly connected and thriving communities are rooted in individual responsibility and action. They host a variety of opportunities for the community to come together and serve each year. Events are posted on the Helena Beautiful Facebook page and announced via Twitter at @TweetHomeHelena.