

PRESS RELEASE

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Mapawa tree planting kicks off envi month commemoration

Cagayan de Oro City – The provincial and community Environment and Natural Resources Office in Misamis Oriental have teamed-up with STEAG State Power Inc (SPI) for a tree-planting activity as an opening salvo to commemorate June as *Environment Month*.

The tree planting will be held at the Mapawa Reforestation Project in Cugman, Cagayan de Oro City on 5 June 2006 to coincide with a world-wide commemoration of June 5 as “Environment Day”. The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) has launched a worldwide advocacy campaign that calls for the greening of the earth. “*Don’t desert drylands!*” is the UNEPs rallying call for this year’s commemoration.

About 150 employees from the provincial and community offices of DENR as well as representatives from SPI will participate in the tree planting. SPI Communications Officer Jerome Soldevilla said “*the tree-planting is not just a one-time activity but a continuing effort to be sustained for several years*”.

“*This tree planting activity forms part of the 1,200 hectares that SPI, together with its government and non-government partners, is reforesting in the highlands of Mapawa*” Earlier reports revealed that the company has already covered the maintenance and improvement of more than 266 hectares and reforested about 23 hectares of barren lands in the Mapawa area since it launched the project two years ago. The Mapawa Reforestation Project has been cited earlier as the first and the biggest private sector-led reforestation project in the country.

Aside from this, the company is also implementing a 1,000 hectare Urban Forestry Project in Tagoloan and Villanueva, Misamis Oriental over the next 25 years. Along this line, two plant nurseries in the area have been established to produce the required planting materials for the purpose.

“*These initiatives form part of the company’s modest contribution to a worldwide call for the greening of the earth*” Soldevilla added.

SPI is currently putting-up the 210MW (net) Mindanao Coal-Fired Power Plant Project in Villanueva, Misamis Oriental to help stabilize supply of electricity in Mindanao. The project is more than 95% completed and is expected to be go on commercial operations by end of 2006.