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Media Contacts

John Agresti
PR/Communications Manager
704-456-7967 (office)
704-575-9379 (cell)
JohnA@visitcabarrus.com

Ken Coffin
US Forest Service
970-878-6001
kcoffin@fs.fed.us

U.S. CAPITOL CHRISTMAS TREE SCHEDULES PIT STOP IN CONCORD, NC *A Celebration of Colorado's gift to the nation*

November 6, 2012 – Concord, NC – On **November 22** the U.S. Forest Service with help from their nonprofit partner, Choose Outdoors will be bringing the US Capitol Christmas Tree (www.CapitolChristmasTree2012.com) to Concord and invites all people young and old to come celebrate this annual holiday tradition.

On November 2, the 2012 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree was harvested in the White River National Forest, near Meeker, CO. The tree is wrapped and being transported to Washington, D.C. on a custom-decorated Mack Pinnacle model truck which will be driven by former U.S. Senator, Ben Nighthorse Campbell.

The U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree will be on display at Concord at zMAX Dragway from **2 - 5 p.m.** This stop will be one of many along the tree's 23-day tour across Colorado and the country on its way to the nation's capital. All festivities with the Tree are open to the public and free for all to enjoy.

As the Tree travels the country, it will carry a message about sustainable forestry as well as invite people to assist with raising funds for the Forest Restoration Challenge. This challenge was set up to help areas impacted by the massive wildfires which devastated areas near Colorado Springs and Fort Collins in the spring of 2012. Those interested in donating can text any dollar amount to 303-502-5858 then donors will then be asked for some basic information to complete the donation.

"This is a great way to kick off Cabarrus Christmas this Holiday season as we host the Capital Christmas Tree on Thanksgiving Day," said Donna Carpenter, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Cabarrus County Convention and Visitors Bureau. "On a day when we are thankful for what we have, Cabarrus County visitors and residents will have the opportunity to see this beautiful tree as it heads to its final destination; the west lawn of the Capital Building. For more information and a full calendar of events, please visit www.CabarrusChristmas.com."

In addition, Toys for Tots will be accepting donations of toys, and ROTARY will accept contributions of coats and nonperishable foods. Festivities being held while the Tree is in town will include the kickoff of the ice skating rink at the dragway for Speedway Christmas.

"Charlotte Motor Speedway is kicking off the holiday season the only way we know how – big. We're thrilled to host a viewing of the Capitol Christmas tree as part of Thanksgiving week festivities for Speedway Christmas, one of the nation's largest holiday light shows. After viewing the Capitol tree, we hope visitors will stick around for ice skating at the Coca-Cola Family Ice Rink and cap the night off with a drive through the light show," said Marcus Smith, President of Charlotte Motor Speedway.

Special events and opportunities to view the tree are being planned in every stop across the country. Santa and Mrs. Claus will also be traveling with the Tree so be sure to have the little one's bring their list so they can show Santa.

"We're working with city officials and volunteers across the country to make the 2012 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree tour an unforgettable experience of both giving back and celebrating the holiday season," said Bruce Ward, founder of Choose Outdoors.

Upon arrival in Washington, D.C., the tree will be placed on the west lawn of the U.S. Capitol and decorated with more than 5,000 ornaments handmade by Colorado children depicting the tree's theme, "Celebrating the Great Outdoors." In early December, a tree lighting ceremony will take place and will be available for public viewing throughout the holiday season.

Costs associated with the tree's transportation and tour events are made possible by contributions by individuals, corporations and local communities. Major sponsors include the Colorado Tourism Office, Mack Trucks and The National Association of Convenience Stores.

For more information on the Concord tour stop, visit CabarrusChristmas.com To track the tree's route, visit CapitolChristmasTree2012.com or you can also follow the tree on Facebook (facebook.com/CapitolChristmasTree2012), Twitter (twitter.com/CapitolTree2012) and Pinterest (pinterest.com/capitoltree2012)

About Choose Outdoors

Choose Outdoors is a coalition for outdoor recreation comprised of people and organizations who are passionate about outdoor recreation, support public lands, waters, and the agencies charged with their care. www.chooseoutdoors.org

About the White River National Forest

The 2.3 million acre White River National Forest is located in west/central Colorado. Providing a vast array of outdoor recreation experiences, the White River hosts more than 9 million visitors per year and is the number one forest for recreation in the country. In addition to world-class recreation and abundant wildlife populations, the White River supports activities such as grazing, timber harvest, mining, and oil and gas development that are crucial to the economies of western Colorado. www.fs.usda.gov/whiteriver

About the Cabarrus County Convention and Visitors Bureau

*As a destination marketing organization, the **Cabarrus County Convention and Visitors Bureau** is dedicated to promoting Cabarrus County as a visitor destination and enhancing the complete visitor experience. We also represent and support the interests of the local tourism industry and promote public awareness of the importance of tourism. Visit our website at www.visitcabarrus.com for more information and find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/visitcabarrus.*

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