

## » NCTA Business Report

### Membership Task Force Formed

As the Real Tree industry continues to change, NCTA leaders want to ensure that the association is prepared to meet the needs of current and future members. At the request of the NCTA Professional Committee, a Membership Task Force has been formed, with members from across the country representing all

segments of the industry. This spring, the task force, chaired by Beth Walterscheidt of Texas, will be looking at NCTA's membership structure, member benefits and pricing, with the goal of presenting recommendations to enhance member value and enhance retention and recruitment.

### NCTA Welcomes New President-elect



Following the resignation of Paul Battaglia of California, the NCTA Board of Directors elected Blake Rafeld of Ohio as the new president-elect. Blake has served on the Executive Committee since 2008 as Vice President of Finance and will continue these duties through the end of the year. He owns Sugargrove Tree Farm, a 90-acre Choose & Cut farm and evergreen tree nursery in Ashland, Ohio. He has been a consultant in private practice since 1988 and began his own consulting business in 1992, focusing on land planning, site development, landscape planting, and downtown revitalization.

**Blake Rafeld**

Paul Schroeder, director for Wisconsin, will take over as chair of the Professional Committee for the remainder of the year.

Many thanks to Paul Battaglia for his years of service and dedication to the NCTA Board and Executive Committee.

### Make Your 2013 Investment

This past Christmas season, NCTA staff responded to numerous media questions and requests for interviews, on topics including drought, sales, bugs, fire safety and more. But what if NCTA didn't exist?

The need for a recognized nationwide Real Christmas Tree community – with the desire to have its voice heard – has

never been stronger. This year, NCTA's leadership will be continuing its focus on protection, advocacy, communication and collaboration. Show your support by making a contribution to the Real Tree Advocacy Fund or Legislative Action Fund. Visit [www.realchristmastrees.org](http://www.realchristmastrees.org) to download an investment form or call 636/449-5070.

### Be Sure to Check Out the New Member Center

The new Online Member Center is now live on the NCTA website. We encourage all members to take a moment to log in and check out the resources available, including recent e-newsletters, Advocacy Alerts, popular *Journal* articles, vendor/supplier information, business resources and more. If you have ideas for additional tools or materials that you'd like to see here, please let us know. See pages 33-34 of this issue for more details and log-in instructions.

### Prepare to Grow at the 2013 NCTA Pre-Season Clinic



In the ongoing mission to stay current with changing industry trends and member needs, NCTA will be hosting a new event in 2013, the NCTA Pre-Season Clinic. The clinic is a specialized event exclusively for those who want to grow their business and enhance their knowledge of critical industry issues, so the program will be unique, targeted and compressed into an information-packed two days. Consider it your pre-season training camp for the 2013 sales season, as the event will bring together the leaders of the industry for networking and education on topics ranging from advocacy to technology to marketing. The 2013 National Tree and Wreath Contests will also be held at this time.

Check out pages 26-28 of this issue for more details and registration information.

(Note: There will NOT be a CT Plus or NCTA Convention and Trade Show in 2013; look for the Convention-style event to return in 2014.)

### Keep Up with...

#### NCTA

 [www.facebook.com/christmastreesandwreaths](http://www.facebook.com/christmastreesandwreaths)

 [www.twitter.com/realtrees](http://www.twitter.com/realtrees)

 [www.youtube.com/realtrees](http://www.youtube.com/realtrees)

#### GSF

 [www.facebook.com/trees4troops](http://www.facebook.com/trees4troops)

 [www.twitter.com/ChristmasSpirit](http://www.twitter.com/ChristmasSpirit) or [www.twitter.com/trees4troops](http://www.twitter.com/trees4troops)

 [www.youtube.com/ChristmasSpiritFdn](http://www.youtube.com/ChristmasSpiritFdn)

## Bring Your Best to the National Tree and Wreath Contests



If you qualified at the state/regional level, we want to see you this summer in Virginia for the National Christmas Tree and Wreath contests. The contests will be held in conjunction with the 2013 Pre-Season Clinic on Aug. 10-11 in Arlington, Va. (Contest setup will take place on Aug. 9.) Contest rules are published on pages 29-32 of this issue, and entry forms are available on the Clinic website at [www.christmas tree.org/dnn/2013clinic](http://www.christmas tree.org/dnn/2013clinic) or by calling 636/449-5070.

### NCTA's New E-Publications

For 2013, NCTA has introduced two new e-publications to keep members up-to-date on industry and association news between issues of the *Journal*.

NCTA *Tree Talk* will be distributed quarterly to all NCTA members via email, and *The Leader* will be sent to all Premier Members twice a year. (*Tradition Makers* will continue to be published and distributed to Choose & Cut Premier Members.)

These new publications are in addition to Advocacy Alerts, which were introduced in 2012. Advocacy Alerts were designed to provide timely and important information on legislative and regulatory issues affecting the Real Tree industry, as well as letting members know how they can make their voice heard. Past Advocacy Alerts and newsletters are archived in the Online Member Center.

If you don't have a current email address on file with NCTA, you may be missing out on this valuable information – please be sure to let us know if you've added or updated your email address.

## Real Tree Industry Awarded \$1.3 Million Research Grant

In fall of 2012, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) announced that it had awarded a major Specialty Crop Research Initiative grant to a group of Real Tree researchers. The long-term goal of the project, led by John Framp-ton of North Carolina State University, is to improve the sustainability and profitability of the U.S. Christmas Tree industry by developing and using genomic

tools to produce low cost and high quality Christmas Trees with properties desired by consumers. The multi-year project will include collaboration with researchers at Washington State University, North Carolina State University, University of California at Davis, Michigan State University and Pennsylvania, as well as support from NCTA, who will assist with consumer and industry research.



Lauren Mangnall

### Lauren Mangnall Promoted to Program Manager

NCTA/CSF staff member Lauren Mangnall was recently promoted to program manager. She has worked with NCTA and other clients as a program coordinator for several years and most recently managed the 2012 Trees for Troops program and the redesign of the NCTA and CSF websites. Lauren will continue to oversee Trees for Troops and the websites, as well as taking on additional duties with publications, membership and fundraising.

### Trees for Troops Delivers 18,994 Christmas Memories

The eighth year of Trees for Troops was a big success, with the final tally coming in at 18,994 trees that were delivered to 66 military bases across the United States, as well as to troops serving in the Middle East. A big thank you to everyone who helped us surpass our goal yet again – whether you donated trees, served as a trailer drop location, collected consumer donations or just helped spread the word!

In past years, more than 2 million households reported they were influenced to purchase a Real Tree because of Trees for Troops, making this a powerful program for the industry as well as the military. If you want to see examples of

how this program benefits military families, take a moment to visit the Trees for Troops Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/treesfortroops](http://www.facebook.com/treesfortroops)) to see the numerous photos and notes of thanks.

If you collected consumer donations, held a fundraiser, solicited sponsorships or hosted a trailer drop, please be sure to submit these contributions as soon as possible. A donation log can be downloaded from the T4T Toolkit at [www.treesfortroops.org](http://www.treesfortroops.org) and mailed to the foundation's payment address:

Christmas SPIRIT Foundation  
201 E. Main Street, Ste. 1405  
Lexington, KY 40507 USA

### Nominations for Christmas SPIRIT Award Close April 15

Do you know someone who goes above and beyond to share the true spirit of Christmas? The Christmas SPIRIT Foundation is now accepting nominations for the annual Christmas SPIRIT Awards. Nominees, which may include individuals, businesses or organizations, should have made a direct, positive impact in

their community, the nation or the world by working with the Christmas SPIRIT Foundation or by assisting another charity or person(s) in need. More information and an online nomination form are available at [www.treesfortroops.org](http://www.treesfortroops.org) (under "About Us"); all nominations are due by April 15, 2013. 🌲