



For More Information:

Ann O'Connor

800/975-5920 (voice)

303/975-5920 (fax)

Ann@realchristmastrees.org (email)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

White House Receives 2016 Christmas Tree from NCTA

Washington, DC - (November 25, 2016) – The White House tradition of beautiful and stunning holiday decorations will soon be on display for the 2016 holiday season. The centerpiece of that tradition, the annual White House Blue Room Christmas Tree, was delivered to the White House today via horse-drawn wagon and presented by Dave and Mary Vander Velden, owners of Whispering Pines Tree Farm in Octonto, Wisconsin.

The tree, a 19 foot Douglas Fir grown in Pennsylvania, was presented to First Lady Michelle Obama by the Vander Veldens, who are the 2016 National Christmas Tree Association Grand Champion winners of the national tree contest. The NCTA has presented the White House with the Annual White House Christmas Tree since 1966. The Grand Champion grower wins the privilege of presenting a tree to the White House.

“It’s a very big honor. In order to present a tree (to the White House), you have to win the national championship. It’s like winning the Super Bowl or a gold medal at the Olympics. It doesn’t get better than that,” Dave Vander Velden said.

A tree from Whispering Pines Tree Farm was handpicked by Angella Reid, White House Chief Usher, along with White House Superintendent of Grounds Dale Haney, Olivia O’Neil with the White House Visitors Office and Jim Adams with the National Park Service. This 19 foot Balsam fir will be displayed in the Garden Room.

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The Vander Veldens began growing Christmas trees in 1984, first in Door County, Wisconsin, for about four years before moving to their present location in Oconto, where they operate Whispering Pines Tree Farm. The Vander Veldens entered the National Christmas Tree Contest four times before winning in 2015.

“Dave has participated in this contest for several years and has done really well and he finally came out on top,” said Tom Dull, President of the National Christmas Tree Association. “He was extremely excited for that to happen and I was excited for him as a first-time winner to be able to present the tree to the White House.”

2016 will mark the 51st year a member from the National Christmas Tree Association has presented the White House with a Christmas Tree. For Real Christmas Tree selection and care tips, or to find a Christmas Tree farm or lot in your area, go to RealChristmasTrees.org.

To enter NCTA’s National Tree Contest and compete for a chance to provide the White House Christmas Tree, NCTA members must first win their state/regional competitions in the previous 12 months.

For accompanying photos of the presentation event, email Ann@realchristmastrees.org or call (800) 975-5920.

ABOUT NCTA

The National Christmas Tree Association (NCTA) is the national trade association representing the farm-grown Christmas tree industry. NCTA represents 29 state and regional associations, and more than 4,000 affiliated farms that grow and sell Christmas trees and business that provide related supplies and services. To learn more about the NCTA, visit www.realchristmastrees.org, or call (800) 975-5920.

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