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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Crystal Spring Tree Farm II Named 2010 Grand Champion

August 18, 2010 (Chesterfield, MO) – Christopher Botek, owner of Crystal Spring Tree Farm II in Lehighton, Pa., became Grand Champion of the National Christmas Tree Contest this summer at the National Christmas Tree Association’s (NCTA) Annual Convention & Trade Show. The convention was held in Winston-Salem, N.C. Chris entered a Colorado blue spruce from his farm as the prize-winning conifer. As a Grand Champion Christmas Tree grower, Chris will present the official White House Christmas Tree to First Lady Michelle Obama for the 2010 Christmas season.

Trees in the contest competed in five species categories: True Fir, Douglas-fir, Spruce, Pine and Other. Convention attendees voted to select the first, second and third-place winners in each category. Then a panel of consumer judges chose the Grand Champion and Reserve Champion trees. These winners were announced at the Awards Banquet held Friday, Aug. 13.

“Since an American farmer gets to provide the Christmas Tree for the White House, it strengthens the fact that farm-grown trees are such an important tradition in our country,” says NCTA President Richard Moore, a Christmas Tree grower from Groton, N.Y. “There is nothing better for our industry than to showcase our farm crop in the most famous house in America.”

Chris’s champion pedigree is a proverbial pine cone that didn’t fall far from the tree, as his parents Francis and Margaret Botek were Grand Champions in 2006 and presented the White House Christmas Tree to Laura Bush. “It’s definitely a source of family pride now that I have won the contest too,” said Botek. “I was very proud of my parents in 2006 and I’m sure they’re ecstatic for me. It’s such an honor for us tree farmers.”

A Fraser fir tree, entered by Joe Freeman, owner of Mistletoe Meadows in Laurel Springs, N.C., was selected as the Reserve Champion in the National Tree Contest.

White House staff will travel to Botek's Pennsylvania farm this fall to select the tree to be displayed in the Blue Room, serving as the centerpiece of the holiday decorations. All of the contest trees, including the winners, were between 6 and 8 feet tall, and following the convention were chipped into mulch and recycled. The Blue Room tree will be much bigger, 18 ½ feet tall to be exact. The selected tree will be harvested and presented to the First Lady once the Christmas season is upon us.

Complete List of Highest Finishers (by Category)

True Fir

First Place (Reserve Champion) - Joe Freeman of Mistletoe Meadows from Laurel Springs, N.C.

Second Place - John Ayers of Roan Valley Tree Farm in Johnson City, Tenn.

Third Place - Thomas and Cynthia Cranston of Cranston's Christmas Trees of Ashfield, Mass.

Douglas-fir

First Place Paul & Sharon Shealer of Evergreen Acres Tree Farm in Auburn, Pa.

Second Place - Daniel Taylor of Taylor Trees dba Dan and Bryan Trees of Kearneysville, W.V.

Spruce

First Place - (Grand Champion) - Christopher Botek of Crystal Spring Tree Farm II of Lehighton, Pa.

Second Place - Glenn Battles of Sugar Pines Farm in Chesterland, Ohio

Pine

First Place - Ken Wahmhoff of Wahmhoff Farms Nursery of Gobles, Mich.

Second Place - Tommy Wagoner of Fraser Knoll Farm of Laurel Springs, N.C.

Third Place - Stuart Smith of Wright's Tree Farm in Ward, S.C.

Other

First Place - Steve Mannhard of Fish River Trees of Summerdale, Ala.

Second Place - Thomas Sawyer of Tom Sawyer's Christmas Trees of Monetta, S.C.