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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

White House Blue Room Christmas Tree Selected

Chesterfield, MO - (October 3, 2011) -- A beautiful 19-foot-tall balsam fir grown on a farm near Neshkoro, Wisc., will be the official White House Christmas Tree this year.

The Blue Room Christmas Tree will be officially presented to First Lady Michelle Obama by Christmas Tree growers Sue and Tom Schroeder. The Schroeders earned this honor by winning the National Christmas Tree Association's (NCTA) national Christmas Tree contest held in August 2011 in Huron, Ohio, and becoming Grand Champion.

The Blue Room Christmas Tree was handpicked by White House Superintendent of Grounds Dale Haney and Jim Adams with the National Park Service on Oct. 3, 2011. The tree, which was planted by the Schroeders 18 years ago, will be cut in late November and sent to Washington, D.C.

The Schroeders have entered trees from their farm in the national contest before. To enter the national contest, growers must first win their state / regional competitions. 2011 was the fourth year the Schroeders had done that and entered a tree in the national contest. Finally winning the contest and earning Grand Champion status validated their hard work and persistence, said Sue Schroeder. "Entering but not winning the national contest is both rewarding and frustrating, knowing that you

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were so close, but finally winning was 100 percent exciting,” said Schroeder. “I’m happy with the tree they selected, and I hope the First Family and all the visitors to the White House enjoy the tree we grew here on our small family farm.” Visitors seeing the tree during the 2011 holiday season will surpass 100,000, according to Haney.

In 1976, Tom and Sue Schroeder had just purchased a house and small shop on a very busy commercial corner in Neenah, Wis. Since December was a slow time for their auto upholstery business, Tom thought selling Christmas Trees might be a good way to supplement their income. The couple’s son, James, has a favorite saying that best describes how the family approaches both their business and personal lives – “Overdo it or do it over.” In other words, if you’re going to do something, try to do the best you possibly can the first time. So the Schroeders did just that. And now they will do something very few other tree farms have done -- provide one to the White House.

“We were looking for the perfect Christmas Tree for the Blue Room and I believe we have found it,” said Haney. “It’s really important that the tree has the right look and feel. I think we have a really great choice this year.”

The presentation to the White House is tentatively scheduled to take place on Nov. 25, 2011. The tree will be set up in the Blue Room later that day, where the White House Floral Department staff and volunteers will decorate it.

Members of the National Christmas Tree Association have presented the official White House Christmas Tree for display in the Blue Room since 1966. For Real Christmas Tree selection and care tips, or to find a Christmas Tree farm or lot in your area, visit www.realchristmastrees.org.

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