



Colorado State Forest Service
5060 Campus Delivery
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO 80523-5060
970.491.6303; FAX 970.491.7736
<http://csfs.colostate.edu/>

NEWS

For Immediate Release

December 11, 2015

Contact for Reporters: Ryan Lockwood

970.491.8970

ryan.lockwood@colostate.edu

State Capitol Holiday Tree Honors Fallen Soldiers, Their Families

DENVER – This year’s State Capitol Holiday Tree, themed the "Gold Star Tree of Honor," pays tribute to the more than 350 Colorado military service members lost in the global war on terror since Sept. 11, 2001, as well as their families.

At 4 p.m. today, Gov. John Hickenlooper will dedicate the tree at a formal lighting ceremony in the Capitol’s North Foyer in honor of Gold Star families – the survivors of service members who have lost their lives in conflict or in support of certain military operations.

“Given that 2015 marks the 14th anniversary of our nation at war, Colorado remains committed to honoring those who have made such a great sacrifice, be they soldiers or their families,” said Janelle Darnell, chief of protocol for the Office of The Adjutant General, Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. “Colorado has not and will not forget their sacrifice and service on behalf of our community, state and nation.”

The Capitol’s holiday tree was provided for the fifth year in a row by the Colorado State Forest Service Fort Collins District. The approximately 50-year-old, 25-foot subalpine fir was harvested on State Trust Land in northern Larimer County.

Colorado National Guard soldiers and their families decorated the tree, and boughs trimmed off of it will be used by the DMVA to craft wreaths for Gold Star families in attendance.

Each year, CSFS foresters selectively cut the State Capitol Holiday Tree and smaller trees destined for the Colorado State University campus as part of ongoing management efforts to improve forest health. This year, the CSFS also harvested a small number of trees for the families of deployed military personnel.

“It is a true honor to be allowed to provide this special tree for our State Capitol,” said Mike Lester, state forester and director of the CSFS, who is himself from a Gold Star family. “To many of us, it is a symbol of much more than the holiday season.”

The Colorado State Forest Service is the lead state agency for providing forest stewardship and management, fuels reduction and wildfire mitigation assistance to private landowners in Colorado. Every

year, the CSFS helps treat 20,000 acres of forestland, and assists approximately 6,400 landowners and hundreds of communities to help improve forest health. The CSFS is a service and outreach agency of the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University.

###