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U.S. Capitol Christmas tree to visit Albany on cross-country journey from Oregon to Washington D.C.

Albany, OR, October 5, 2018 – The Willamette National Forest in partnership with nonprofit partner Choose Outdoors and Travel Oregon will bring the 2018 U.S. Capitol Christmas tree to Albany as part of tree's cross-country journey to Washington, D.C. for the holiday season. The tree will be stationed on Fourth Avenue SW in front of the Linn County Courthouse on Saturday, November 10, beginning at 9 a.m.

Albany is one of more than 25 communities where the tree will be displayed along the way. Every year, a different national forest is selected to provide a tree to appear on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol for the Christmas season. The Willamette National Forest was chosen for 2018.

The theme for the 2018 "People's Tree" is "Find Your Trail!" in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the National Trails System Act and the 175th commemoration of the Oregon Trail. The Capitol Christmas tree on the reverse path of the Oregon Trail as it goes east. The 3,000-mile expedition will include a series of community celebrations and culminate with the official tree lighting in early December. Smaller companion trees will be provided to decorate offices inside the U.S. Capitol building and other sites throughout Washington, D.C. Oregonians are creating 10,000 tree ornaments.

Festivities during the tree's visit to Albany on November 10 include the annual Albany Veterans Day Parade (the largest Veterans Day parade west of the Mississippi River), official welcoming of the People's Tree by City officials and other dignitaries, a booth greeting visitors to the celebration (and a chance to win free rides at the Albany Historic Carousel & Museum), presentations by the Boys and Girl Scouts of America, and Albany Farmers' Market vendors and merchandise. Activities are free and open to the public.

"We are honored that the U.S. Capitol Christmas tree will visit Albany on its journey to Washington, D.C.," said Albany Mayor Sharon Konopa. "Our community is fortunate to be among those hosting the tree and helping to create hundreds of hand-crafted ornaments that will grace the tree in true Oregon style. We are eagerly awaiting the tree lighting in December."

The U.S. Capitol Christmas tree is made possible with cash and in-kind contributions from companies large and small and volunteers locally and across America who provide time and resources.

"We are grateful to the host cities such as Albany who play a vital part of bringing the tree across the country and this annual celebration," said Bruce Ward, President, Choose Outdoors.

For more information on the Albany event, visit www.albanyvisitors.com. For related U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree news, events, and to track the tree cross-country, visit www.capitolchristmastree.com, and follow Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

About the Willamette National Forest

With over 1.5 million acres, the Willamette National Forest is home to eight wilderness areas, including the popular Three Sisters Wilderness and Mt. Jefferson Wilderness, a variety of backpacking and day hiking opportunities, waterfalls, wildflowers, mountain biking trails, boating, swimming and much more! The varied landscape of high mountains, narrow canyons, cascading streams, and wooded slopes offers excellent opportunities for visitors. We hope this yearlong Capitol Christmas Tree event inspires people to explore the Willamette National Forest. The logo captures the beauty of the State of Oregon and the Willamette National Forest, with its snowcapped mountain, fields of green and lush forests. The trail leading to the tree symbolizes the adventurous spirit of Oregonians. The logo encourages modern-day adventurers to #FindYourTrail on the Willamette National Forest.

About the U.S. Forest Service

The mission of the U.S. Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land; provides assistance to state and private landowners; and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world. Public lands the Forest Service manages contribute more than \$13 billion to the economy each year through visitor spending alone. Those same lands provide 20 percent of the nation's clean water supply, a value estimated at \$7.2 billion per year. For more information, see www.fs.fed.us.

About Choose Outdoors

Choose Outdoors works to increase all American's enjoyment, appreciation and support for outdoor recreation activities that connect them to our public lands. These connections will ensure that our public lands will always be there for future generations to cherish. www.chooseoutdoors.org.

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