

November 16, 2006

Massive white spruce arrives at Legislature November 17

Christmas tree contributed by Alberta forest producer each year

Edmonton... A Slave Lake forest products company is teaming up with Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation to 'spruce up' the Legislature grounds. The arrival of a 16-metre Christmas tree at the Legislature grounds Friday morning marks the onset of the holiday season and continues the tradition of Yuletide cooperation between government and industry to provide a Christmas tree for all Albertans to enjoy.

Each year, Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation and the Alberta Forest Products Association partner to provide a Christmas tree for the Legislature grounds. This year, Vanderwell Contractors of Slave Lake has the honour of finding and delivering the tree, which is the highlight of the spectacular annual lighting display at the Legislature grounds that gets underway Nov. 30.

"The efforts of the Alberta Forest Products Association and its members to provide Albertans with a tree they can be proud of serve to remind us of the important economic contribution made by the forestry industry," said Ty Lund, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation.

The 65-year-old natural white spruce stands nearly 16 metres tall and weighs about 650 kilograms. The tree is coming from an area 30 kilometres east of Slave Lake, north of the Old Smith Highway. From the Vanderwell side, 15 people were involved in locating, cutting, preparing, loading and transporting the tree to the Legislature grounds.

"Our company is pleased to continue a lengthy tradition of providing the Christmas tree for the Legislature and the people of Alberta," said Ken Vanderwell, General Manager of Vanderwell Contractors and current Alberta Forest Products Association President.

Legislature grounds staff will decorate the tree and the entire grounds for the holiday celebrations. After the holidays, the tree will be chipped and used for garden mulch.

"Last year, more than 20,000 Albertans visited the Legislature grounds to help us celebrate the season," said Speaker Ken Kowalski. "The tree provided to us by the Alberta Forest Products Association is the centrepiece to a winter wonderland enjoyed by so many."

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Photo Opportunity/Editors Note:

The tree is expected to arrive at the Legislature grounds at approximately 9:30 a.m. on Friday, Nov. 17. A crane will be on site to help erect the tree, which will take several hours.

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