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## HARTFORD GOES GREEN FOR 46<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF LIGHT

### *Opening Ceremony Tree Features Environmentally Friendly Details*

HARTFORD, CT (November 11, 2009) — On Fri., Nov. 27, at 5:30pm, the warm bright glow of thousands of LED lights will blanket a new tree in Constitution Plaza, as part of the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Hartford Festival of Light. This year, Hartford is erecting a manufactured tree for the first time. The tree stands 32 feet tall, and 14 feet wide, topped with a 4-foot star. It will be the hallmark fixture of Constitution Plaza's opening ceremony activities, surrounded by musical and dance performances.

In addition to recycling a pre-owned tree, event sponsors and city officials are excited to be able to use the tree for many years to come, and even "grow" the tree, by adding 4-foot segments for future Festivals. Returning again this year are the LED lights that decorate both the tree and the surrounding planters and fountain. The Festival's lights were donated last year by the event's title sponsors [list]. For the first time ever, the holiday tree will sparkle with colored LED lights.

According to the installation team, several Plaza passersby have mistaken the tree for a fresh tree, complimenting on its bushy needles and grand stature. This year's tree took a day and a half to install, as compared to previous years, when a fresh tree took more than 2 days to raise, with the help of several expensive and gas-guzzling cranes.

"Our choice of a manufactured tree is part of a mission to support Hartford's efforts to go green," said Kate Bolduc, Chief Executive Officer for the Greater Hartford Arts Council. "While everything about the opening ceremony will be steeped in 46 years of tradition - the magic, the holiday spirit, the wonderful lights - the addition of this new tree adds a contemporary and eco-friendly perspective to the event."

"The Knox Parks Foundation supports the decision to use a manufactured tree," said Ron Pitz, Executive Director of the Knox Park Foundation. "While we endorse the use of natural trees for home use that were sustainably grown and cut for the holiday season, a 32' forest grown or donated tree would need to be located, cut and transported to the site. A tree of this size would not have been grown for this purpose and in our opinion would be much more valuable to the environment alive and growing, consuming carbon dioxide (the most abundant greenhouse gas), producing oxygen and providing homes and food for wildlife."

Pitz added "The LED lighting on the tree is energy efficient and rounds out this green, environmentally friendly decision. Let's hope other organizations around the country that cut down and decorate large trees will follow this example and switch to natural looking - ideally recycled plastic - manufactured trees that can be reused for many years, decorated with energy efficient lighting."



The free, community-focused Festival continues until January 6th (Three Kings Day), with lights aglow from dusk to Midnight each evening. Details on the opening ceremony and entire Hartford Festival of Light can be found online at [www.LetsGoArts.org/HFOL](http://www.LetsGoArts.org/HFOL) or by calling the Greater Hartford Arts Council at 860-525-8629.

The festival serves as a major toy drive for the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots™ program. The toy drive is expected to collect thousands of toys during the festival's duration to benefit children in need throughout the state of Connecticut. In the spirit of holiday giving, festival attendees are encouraged to bring a new, unwrapped toy to the opening ceremony on Constitution Plaza, during special festival weekend events, or at satellite toy collection locations. Constitution Plaza Garages and State House Square Garages will offer free parking during the Opening Ceremony with the donation of a toy or \$5. For more details, visit [www.LetsGoArts.org/HFOL](http://www.LetsGoArts.org/HFOL).

The Hartford Festival of Light® is made possible through the generosity of sponsors throughout the region. Title Sponsors are Capital Properties, Connecticut Light & Power, Mohegan Sun, and United Technologies. To date, additional support has been provided by Platinum Sponsors: Allied Printing Services, Inc., READCO LLC; Gold Sponsors: Hartford Business Improvement District, XL Insurance; Silver Sponsors: Dunkin Donuts, Robinson & Cole LLP, Trantolo & Trantolo, UCONN School of Business. Fox61 is the media on this event. Special thanks to AAO Music, the City of Hartford, to E.D.P. Wiring, and to the Charlie Company 1st Battalion 25th Marine Regiment.

The Greater Hartford Arts Council enlivens the spirit and economy of Connecticut's Capital Region by planning, promoting and raising funds for cultural programs that are building one of our nation's most vibrant communities. It is the largest independent arts council in New England, one of the top 10 United Arts fund in the country, and a national leader in diversified services and cultural promotions. The Greater Hartford Arts Council has raised and invested \$58 million for the arts over 38 years, helping to rank Greater Hartford in the top 6 percent of metropolitan areas in North America for its arts and culture. More information about the Greater Hartford Arts Council may be found at [LetsGoArts.org](http://LetsGoArts.org). For a full list of Holiday events, visit [LetsGoArts.org/Calendar](http://LetsGoArts.org/Calendar).