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*NEWS RELEASE*

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*Department of General Services*

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**2008 California State Christmas Tree En-Route To Capitol**

Sacramento, Calif – For more than 25 years, the state of California has commenced the holiday season with the arrival of the official California state Christmas tree at the Capitol. Tomorrow, a stately silver tip pine donated by the U.S. Forest Service Institute of Forest Genetics will be installed on the west lawn of the Capitol by the Department of General Services (DGS). Eight years ago, the silver tip was selected to hold the honor of being the official state Christmas tree. The 2008 silver tip will ascend approximately 50 feet into the air.

The state Christmas tree was cut down earlier today by DGS' Bonifacio Sanchez from the U.S. Forest Service property in Camino. Transportation of the tree will occur tomorrow by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Once the tree arrives at the Capitol, DGS employees will set up, trim and decorate the tree before the Governor and First Lady's annual tree lighting ceremony on December 9, 2008.

One of the richest and most widely celebrated state traditions is the donation of 1,500 hand crafted ornaments by the Department of Developmental Services. The ornaments, created by children and adults with developmental disabilities who receive services and support from state developmental centers and 21 nonprofit regional centers, will trim the entire California state Christmas tree.

Continuing Gov. Schwarzenegger's greening of California, 6,500 ultra-low-wattage LED lights will illuminate the tree, saving the state 95 percent of the energy normally consumed by incandescent bulbs. Since 2006, the state Christmas tree's LED lights have been powered by a hydrogen fuel cell, which emits only pure water and allows the lights to operate without using electricity from the power grid. This year, the fuel cell has been provided by Folsom-based Altery Systems, a member of the California Stationary Fuel Cell Collaborative. Air Products, a Pennsylvania based company with three California locations, will provide the hydrogen for the fuel cell at no cost.

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