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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Park Service, National Park Foundation Announce 2009 National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony on December 3rd

Public Invited to Visit www.thenationaltree.org November 4th – 6th to Enter Ticket Lottery

Washington, D.C. - - The National Park Service and the National Park Foundation announce today the annual National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony will be held on Thursday, December 3, 2009, at 5:00 p.m., on the Ellipse in Washington, D.C. This year, the event will introduce a new lottery system for the general public, providing a chance to obtain free tickets to the ceremony.

The new online lottery will be available beginning at 12:01 a.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on Wednesday, November 4th (or 11:01 p.m. Central Standard Time (CST), 10:01 p.m. Mountain Standard Time (MST) and 9:01 p.m. Pacific Standard Time (PST) on Tuesday, November 3rd). The ticket lottery remains open through 11:59 p.m. EST on Friday, November 6th (or 10:59 p.m. CST, 9:59 p.m. MST and 8:59 p.m. PST on Friday evening, November 6th), by going to www.thenationaltree.org and following the link to the online ticket lottery application page at www.recreation.gov. The National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony marks the opening of the four- week event sponsored by the National Park Service and the National Park Foundation, the official charitable partner of America's National Parks.

The lottery at www.thenationaltree.org will include 2,800 ticketed seats and 7,000 standing room tickets. The website will contain all necessary information to apply for 2009 National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony tickets. Additionally, any ticket seeker without access to a computer may also call (877- 444- 6777 or for TDD (877) 833- 6777) beginning Wednesday, November 4th through Friday, November 6th to place their name into the lottery. Once the lottery is completed, ticket lottery seekers who submitted their request via computer will be notified via email. Successful ticket seekers who applied by calling the above- listed number will receive a notice sent via U.S. Mail. Beginning on November 9, 2009 all ticket seekers may check the status of their request online or through the call center after conclusion of the lottery. The tickets are free and may not be sold.

Tickets will be mailed by November 15, 2009 to ticket winners through the U.S. Postal Service. The package that ticket lottery winners will receive provides their tickets and other important event information including directions, map, event schedule, restricted items, and other planning information. Please be advised tickets are required for every attendee, including all children.

The National Park Service is also pleased to announce there will be 7,000 additional public tickets in a standing room area. Ticket seekers are advised this area will be strictly standing- room only, as there are no chairs nor are portable chairs allowed in the event site. The standing room only section will have a clear view of the National Christmas Tree, and a large screen showing the stage production, but will have a limited view of the event stage. Tickets for the standing room area will be available through the same ticket lottery described above.

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The gates for the National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony will open for all ticket holders at 3:30 p.m. and all ticket holders must be in their seats or in the standing room area by 4:30 p.m.

This year's talent line up for the opening ceremony will be announced in November.

Guests are reminded that aerosols of any kind, fireworks/firecrackers, animals (except guide dogs), duffel bags/suitcases/backpacks/coolers, real or simulated ammunition, knives of any kind, mace/pepper spray, laser lights/pointers, chairs, and glass containers are prohibited. This list may not be inclusive. Law enforcement personnel reserve the right to prohibit any other items determined to be a potential public safety hazard. Strollers, wheelchairs and diaper bags are allowed, but guests should be prepared for a search of all items carried onto the site.

Parking is not available near the White House. The National Park Service strongly encourages the use of public transportation. The closest Metro stops are Metro Center, Federal Triangle, Farragut North, Farragut West and McPherson Square. For questions about the National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, please call the White House Visitor Center at (202) 208-1631, or visit the National Park Service website at www.nps.gov/whho or the National Park Foundation event related web site at www.thenationaltree.org.

The National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony is presented by the National Park Foundation and National Park Service with support from Underwriters Laboratories. Other supporters include General Electric, Alex Coletti Productions, Hilton Garden Inn Downtown Washington, D.C., Hudler Carolina Tree Farms and the Willard InterContinental Hotel, Washington, D.C.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System and its 391 National Park sites for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION

The [National Park Foundation](http://www.nationalparkfoundation.org) is an independent charitable organization chartered by Congress in 1967 to strengthen the connection between the American people and their 391 national park sites. As the official national non-profit partner of America's National Parks, the Foundation raises private funds, makes strategic grants, creates innovative partnerships and increases public awareness about the need and opportunity for park philanthropy. In its 2008 fiscal year, the National Park Foundation distributed grants and program support of \$27.3M.

For more information, visit: www.nps.gov or www.nationalparks.org