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U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree will travel from Arizona to Washington, D.C., on clean burning biodiesel-run truck

TUCSON, Ariz.—Arizona had a connection to the first U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree and will once again have a connection with the Christmas tree tradition established in 1964 by U.S. House Speaker John W. McCormack (D-Mass.)

On Dec. 18, 1964, Senate president Pro Tempore Carl Hayden (D-Ariz.) lit the first tree, which was transported from Buddies Nursery in Birdsboro, Pa.

This year's Christmas tree will be transported from the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, headquartered in Springerville, Ariz., to Washington, D.C., on a Southwest Industrial Rigging truck fueled by biodiesel. The tree is expected to be cut down on Nov. 7. For more details about the ceremony, visit <http://capitolchristmastree2009.org/>

Southwest Industrial Rigging, an Arizona-based company since 1984, specializes in the delivery of heavy duty machinery and crane equipment,

"We are thrilled to be a part of history, and bringing biodiesel as the fuel of choice into that history," said Mike Monfred, Compliance Officer of Southwest Industrial Rigging in Phoenix.

Tucson also has a connection. The Capitol Christmas Tree 2009 team is working with the Tucson Regional Clean Cities Coalition to promote a "green" theme with the use of an alternative fuel during the cross-country delivery.

"We are honored to be the first state to deliver the tree in a clean green manner," said Richard Davalos, Coordinator of the Capitol Christmas Tree. "We

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Pima Association of Governments is an association of local, state and tribal governments with a mission to build consensus among its members and the public on regional planning for transportation, air quality and water quality. Please visit www.pagnet.org for more information.

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Page 2

are also honored to help promote reducing America's dependence on foreign oil."

The Tucson Regional Clean Cities Program at Pima Association of Governments, the National Biodiesel Foundation and Southwest Industrial Rigging will assist Arizona officials in plotting the route to Washington, D.C.

The route will allow for refueling with biodiesel and the public will be educated along the way about the benefits of biodiesel and the importance of reducing America's dependence on foreign oil.

"This is a great undertaking, and one that Arizona should be proud of," said Tom Verry, Executive Director of the National Biodiesel Foundation. "We are happy that renewable, cleaner burning biodiesel will be part of our Capitol's Christmas tradition."

The Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest is leading the production, along with many partners and sponsors.

"The process is honorary, historic and a production like none other," said Clean Cities Manager Colleen Crowninshield. "Arizona has a grand opportunity to showcase the 'Grand Canyon State' with a tree that will illuminate the foreground of the nation's Capitol with all the magic and splendor representative of our great state."

Partners in the biodiesel promotion include the State of Arizona, Southwest Industrial Rigging, the National Biodiesel Foundation, and the Tucson Regional Clean Cities Coalition. Arizona Petroleum has kicked off sponsorship of fuel by donating \$500 toward the purchase of biodiesel. If your organization would like to sponsor biodiesel along the journey, please contact Colleen Crowninshield at ccrowninshield@pagnet.org or call (520) 792-1093.