



## For Immediate Release

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## Arizona Capitol to Shine Bright with the White Mountain Apache Tribe's Gift of State Christmas Tree

**Whiteriver, Arizona** – November 20, 2023 – The White Mountain Apache Tribe, in partnership with the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM), deliver the 2023 Arizona State Christmas tree for display at the State Capitol.

Tribal members along with DFFM staff hand selected the tree from the Fort Apache Indian Reservation in east Central Arizona. The stunning 30-foot blue spruce symbolizes hope, unity, and the importance of preserving natural resources. The blue spruce tree species grow at about 8,000 to 9,000 feet elevations in Arizona. It was chosen for its attractive bluish color, fragrance, and conical shape.

"It is an absolute honor to receive the Capitol Christmas tree from the White Mountain Apache Tribe for the first holiday season of my administration," said Governor Katie Hobbs. "This is the first time a Tribal Nation in Arizona has gifted the tree for the executive tower, and it's an appropriate symbol of our ever-growing partnership."

Tribal Chairman Kasey Velasquez expressed the tribal community's excitement about the tree's selection, saying, "I am deeply honored to acknowledge the request from the Arizona Governor's Office for a Christmas tree from our beautiful Fort Apache Indian Reservation. This gesture demonstrates the recognition of our rich culture and the spirit of giving that the holiday season represents. The White Mountain Apache Tribe gladly accepts this opportunity to share the beauty and traditions of our land with the State of Arizona and look forward to cultivating a sense of unity and goodwill during this special time."

The White Mountain Apache Tribe is blessed with some of the most beautiful land in the southwestern United States. The Tribe manages their land to benefit all natural resources, including vegetation, soil, water, air, fish, and wildlife. Forests on tribal lands are managed to benefit every tribal member. Each natural resource is considered as synergistic to the other resources.

The White Mountain Apache Tribe's gift of the Capitol Christmas tree will serve as a reminder of the strength of Arizona's diverse cultures, and the importance of preserving our heritage and natural resources. Crews harvested the tree on November 16, 2023, and delivered it to the Capitol the following day after a sendoff ceremony at the Hon-dah Casino and Resort. The official tree lighting ceremony takes place on December 4, at 9:00 am, in the lobby of the Executive Tower.

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