

Press Release

For Immediate Release  
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## **Tourism's Festival of Trees Deemed a Success**

Greeneville, Tenn. – The first ever Festival of Trees hosted by the Tourism Department of the Greene County Partnership November 17-27 has been deemed a success by the committee members. “This has been the first year that Tourism has been involved in this event,” stated Tammy Kinser, Tourism Director for the Greene County Partnership. “When our Fundraising Committee was made aware that the past hosts of the event no longer wanted to take part, that was the signal for our committee of seven to spring into action.”

The event, which featured a total of 46 items, 16 trees and 30 wreaths, centerpieces and nativities, was held in the Greeneville Commons Shopping Center and drew more than 1,000 spectators including a large group from West Greene High School, several residents and employees from Greene Valley Developmental Center and a women's church group from Morristown that later dined at one of Greeneville's newest restaurants therefore contributing to an increase in sales tax revenue for the town.

“The Festival of Trees is a warming way to get in the mood for the holidays,” stated Nicole Rader, committee member. “You can't beat being able to buy that perfect tree that meets your taste, that you don't have to decorate or that gorgeous centerpiece that makes your decorations complete. This year, we had a great turnout from donors and we certainly couldn't have done it without them.”

The event began with a very successful open house on November 17 with more than 350 in attendance and continued each day until the conclusion at noon on Tuesday, November 26, with a crowd gathering to place one more bid on their favorite treasures. A total of 112 individuals registered for a bid number and placed bids throughout the 10 days of the event. At its conclusion on the 26<sup>th</sup>, the area was packed with more than 50 shoppers eager to place the winning bid and take home their treasures.

Promoted as a fundraiser for Tourism and its Sports Council, the event brought in more than \$6,000 to be split between the two departments to enable Tourism to increase their efforts to promote Greeneville and Greene County as a vacation and sports destination.

In its inaugural year, more than 750 votes were cast for the People's Choice award. The 2013 winner was Kelly Merkel with Merkel Brothers Construction and her entry the "Mardi Gras" Christmas tree. Kelly won a \$50 gift certificate compliments of Three Blind Mice.

The committee, composed of Nicole Rader with Holston Home, Nicki Sentelle with American Greetings, Sharon Hughes with the Greeneville Sun, Sharon O'Neal with Richland Creek Gifts, Rhonda Humbert, Kelly Merkel and Kinser, were very pleased with the results and are actively working on the 2014 event.

Special thanks go out to Jaron Snoeyenbos with State Farm for supplying cookies, hot cider and coffee for the entire duration of the event, all the local businesses that donated items for the door prizes and to the sponsors, DTR Tennessee, Food City, The Greeneville Sun, WCYB and WGRV. The committee would also like to thank all those that bid and especially those businesses, individuals, churches and clubs that participated by donating an item for the silent auction.

For more information on how to participate in the 2014 Festival of Trees, please contact Nicole Rader at 423-787-8753 or Tammy Kinser at 423-638-4111 or email [tkinser@greenecop.com](mailto:tkinser@greenecop.com). For pictures of this year's event, please visit Tourism's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/DiscoverGreenevilleTN.Now>.