

## Tree on its way

Written by

Friday, 23 November 2007 09:03

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It took twelve men, two chainsaws and about an hour and a half- but the official White House Christmas tree came down just after 10:15 today.

The 20-foot-tree, donated by 2007 National Christmas Tree winner Joe Freeman at Mistletoe Meadows Farm in Ashe County, will soon start its trek to Washington D.C. where First Lady Laura Bush will receive it on November 26. Freeman plans to tour Washington D.C. this weekend- a welcome change from the stress of harvest season.

The tree is thirteen and a half feet wide- a difficult task for those assigned to bale the branches. A strong twine was used- but baling the tree wasn't the only complication, Freeman says.

It weighed almost 2,000 pounds and took several people to haul to the waiting truck.

It was an exciting event for spectators like 7-year-old Georgia Howell. She described the event in one word:

&quot;Happy!&quot;

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Floridian Brenda Downing came from her summer home in Valle Crucis to see the tree.

She says it was worth the trip- and the snow made the occasion magical.

Jane Lonin and the Ashe County Arts Council had another treat for the Freemans.

A quilt square was dedicated in their honor- part of the Ashe County Arts Council's quilt project, to be placed on one of Mistletoe Meadows' barns Wednesday.

The tree is among the first planted by Freeman, and, while he's sad to see it go, he's excited

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it will be in the Blue Room of the White House.