



State Senator Scott T. Rupp ~ District 2

The Rupp Report

Serving Lincoln County & St. Charles County

Column For Week of: December 6, 2010

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Trees for Troops Brings Military Families Holiday Cheer

While our honorable soldiers are defending our freedoms away from home, they sometimes are absent when they want to be with their loved ones the most, which is during the holiday season. Recognizing that our military families are missing their loved ones, the Christmas SPIRIT Foundation, a branch of the National Christmas Tree Association, created Trees For Troops, which has provided trees to more than 66,000 families at more than 50 U.S. military bases across the world.

Trees for Troops, a public charity recognized by the IRS, was organized in 2005 and has touched the hearts of many. Nearly 800 Christmas tree farms participate in the program in almost 30 states. FedEx, which carries the trees to grateful military families, has traveled more than 221,000 miles since Trees for Troops' founding. Other companies and organizations that support Trees for Troops include Enterprise Rent-A-Car, the Sundt Foundation, the American Freedom Foundation, and Cost Plus World Market.

The organization receives letters of thanks from military families all over the world, some who have spent several holidays away from their loved ones. One thankful recipient of a Tree for Troops Christmas tree wrote, "I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone at Trees for Troops; the tree farmers, the volunteers, and everyone who provides donations to make this possible and to keep it going. I just picked up a tree today and I greatly appreciate the fact that people like you take the time to remember the military and our families during the holidays."

Trees for Troops is part of a much larger picture. The National Christmas Tree Association, based in Missouri and founded in 1955, focuses on bringing Christmas spirit to citizens across the country. Their charitable branch, the Christmas SPIRIT Foundation, centers their attention on providing assistance to children, families, and the environment. For children and families, the foundation has provided children's books to young readers; helped create online curriculum for teachers; provided food, clothing, and shelter to those in need; assisted those affected by hurricane disasters; and has built a playground for St. Louis children who are less fortunate. For the environment, the Christmas SPIRIT Foundation has adapted a recycling program, EARTH 911, which promotes the recycling of used Christmas trees.

I appreciate all the kindness shown by the generous workers and volunteers at Trees for Troops and at the Christmas SPIRIT Foundation. Their dedication to making the holidays merrier truly shows in the smiles of our troops and their families. I would also like to show my gratitude to our military. Thanks to the sacrifices these men and women make, our country is able to celebrate the holidays in freedom. For your service, we are eternally thankful. To learn more about the Christmas SPIRIT Foundation and Trees for Troops, visit www.christmasspiritfoundation.org.

If you have any questions regarding this matter or any other issues within state government, please visit my website at www.senate.mo.gov/rupp. You can also [e-mail me](#) or call my office toll-free at (866) 271-2844.

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