

Wednesday, November 14, 2018

# All Spruced up for Christmas Cheer

## Rockford's holiday tree stands about 40 feet tall

By Kevin Haas

Staff writer

ROCKFORD — The city's official Christmas tree was delivered downtown on Tuesday, complete with a police escort that blocked off two lanes of traffic.

The broad blue spruce, which stands approximately 40 feet tall, was harvested from a home on Highview Drive in Winnebago before getting a seven-mile escort from Rockford police to its home for the holidays at the corner of West State and Wyman streets.

"It was probably the widest tree we've transported, so it took up a full two lanes of traffic," said John Richards, president and owner of Tree Care Enterprises, which harvested the tree. "We had to have four police cars escort us all the way from Winnebago to downtown."

The tree serves as the centerpiece for the annual Stroll on State festivities, a holiday festival that brought an estimated 82,500 people downtown last year, according to the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. This will be the sixth year for Stroll on State, which takes place Nov. 24, the Saturday after Thanksgiving.

"The whole entire night is so magical," said Andrea Cook, associate director of marketing and communications for the visitors bureau. "It's building traditions. That's what means so much, the tradition part of it, and the memories that people are making with their families and friends is what it's all about."!

Work to harvest the tree began shortly after sunrise at the home of the Joseph Munguia family, which donated the tree. By 10:30 a.m., it was in its stand downtown. The harvest and transport was a joint effort of Tree Care, R.L.

Leek Industries, Creative Crane, Stenstrom and city police.

The next step is decorating the tree and the rest of downtown for the stroll. Decorating will happen Friday and Saturday. You can volunteer by signing up at [strollonstate.com](http://strollonstate.com).

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**A roughly 40-foot tall blue spruce is lowered Tuesday by a crane into its stand at the corner of West State and Wyman streets. The tree, donated by the Joseph Munguia family, will serve as the city's official Christmas Tree during the annual Stroll on State. [KEVIN HAAS/RRSTAR.COM STAFF]**