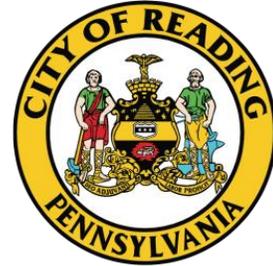


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

It's Beginning to Look a Lot like Christmas

Reading, PA – November 10, 2015 – On this dreary November day, The City of Reading received a dose of holiday cheer. Dozens of people gathered downtown at the corner of 5th and Penn Streets this morning to witness the delivery of this year's centerpiece for the holiday celebrations that will take place throughout the months of November and December.

This year's stunning 25' Concolor Fir was donated by Godfrey's: Welcome to Dogdom (located in Mohnton, PA) and was cut, bound, and delivered by Plow Farms (located in Plowville, PA), a family owned company that provides evergreen, shade and ornamental nursery stock, as well as nursery services ranging from machine digging to job site delivery.

The tree valued at \$1,000, as well as all costs to cut, bind and transport the tree downtown were all donated to the City of Reading. The City of Reading's Police Department were on hand to safely secure the area to unload the tree off the flat-bed that carried it from Godfrey's in Mohnton and Public Works employees were there to cut and fit the tree into place, with the assistance of Verizon's cranes and crew, which were also donated.

This annual event lead every year by the City's Administration – mainly the Public Works and Police Departments – gained national attention last year after the former City Council President, Francis Acosta, called last year's tree "ugly and pathetic" and campaigned to replace it.

Both strong supporters and opponents of the tree were outspoken, piquing political and media interest that drew national attention to the City of Reading. For every demand to have the 'ugly' tree taken down, the Mayor's Office received a demand to keep the tree in place. Mayor Spencer noted, "No one could have prepared me for the attention that our tree received last year. Countless phone calls and letters came in from all corners of the country – even a few from overseas – all encouraging and supporting my administration's endeavor to keep our tree. The story of our tree and the underdog coming out on top was inspiring to so many."

In the end, the ugly tree, now known affectionally as 'the Charlie Brown Tree' stayed where it was. Mr. Acosta put up a second tree on Penn Street to welcome people as they entered the City of Reading. The community participated in fun festivities and decorated both trees.

One letter, sent from a woman in Wisconsin, described her experience watching the story of the tree in the news. "You have pulled together and there is pride, joy, and hometown pride in that." The letter ended with an offer of praise and congratulations. "Many blessings to you. I couldn't applaud you more for your gentle reminder of what is important."

This year, that hometown pride is apparent. The community came together and a group of volunteers ranging from City Council members to local business owners to city residents, has been diligently working for months to help the administration find and deliver a beautiful tree worthy of following last year's tree.

Their hard work has been well received and appreciated. "This committee has been completely dedicated to making sure that the City of Reading looks beautiful this holiday season," commented Mayor Spencer. "They have donated countless hours of their time to the City and to the Downtown Improvement District Authority to guarantee an exciting lineup of fun events in a festive holiday setting for the next couple of months."

To begin, this year's tree lighting ceremony, hosted by the Downtown Improvement District Authority, will take place on November 20 at 6:30 PM. The annual holiday parade "Holidays Around the World" will make its way down Penn Street on November 21 at 9:30 AM.

For more information regarding these events, please visit Reading's Downtown Improvement District Authority's website at www.downtownreading.com.

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Verizon, Plow Farms and Public Works crews remove tree from flatbed



City Arborist cuts tree trunk to fit



Plow Farms, Verizon and Public Works employees guide tree on Verizon crane to sidewalk



Verizon crew removes binding from tree



Four generations of the Eshleman family, who own Plow Farms, were on site today



Verizon team securing the tree



The City of Reading's 2015 Holiday Tree, generously donated by Godfrey's.