

Florida Christmas Tree Association

Fall Meeting November 1st & 2nd, 2008

The fall Florida Christmas Tree Association meeting will be hosted by Jack and Judy Ewing at the Best Western Hotel in Tavares on November 1st & 2nd. Special FCTA rates are \$73.99 for King or two Queen size beds. Call 352-253-2378 for reservations by October 17th. The farm tour will be at their farm, Santa's Christmas Tree Forest, east of Eustis. They have put together an exciting program that you won't want to miss so mark the date on your calendar now.

Jack and Judy started selling Christmas trees in 1989. They were very excited to sell 100 trees the first year. Since they only had trees up to six feet tall to sell the first year, they considered it a good year. Over the years the farm has become more and more of an Agri-Tourism destination for their guests. They now host between 15,000 and 20,000 guests each year. Activities at their farm now include a farm zoo, horse and pony rides, miniature horse cart rides, hay rides, play haystack, Santa, gift shop and wreath shop. They are adding a maze and corn box this year. The concession stand sells drinks, chips, candy, kettle korn, and u-cook hotdogs. A bonfire is available where guests can roast their own hotdogs. In addition to their choose and cut operation, they also ship in Fraser Firs, Douglas Firs, Blue Spruce, and Scotch pine. Jack will be explaining how to care for the cut trees in the warm climate and the Trees for Troops program. The farm can also be reserved for birthday parties, church youth parties, office parties, etc.

The program on Saturday morning will include Greg Milhalic, Director of Lake County Tourism. He will be discussing the opportunities available to advertise your farm free of charge through your county tourism division. Jack Ewing will then present a program about the operation of his farm followed by a presentation by Mike Rinck, President of Agri-Starts. He's an expert on tissue culture. Can we clone our best Christmas tree in the laboratory? We will be touring Mike's nursery and laboratory after lunch in addition to Santa's Christmas Tree Forest.

Saturday night's banquet will be catered by Luigi's and feature Chicken Marsala. The guest speaker will be announced later.

Sunday's program will be a general membership meeting and update on NCTA followed by tree talk so come prepared with questions and we will try to get them answered.

FLORIDA CHRISTMAS TREE ASSOCIATION

Fall Meeting Nov 1 & 2, 2008



Oct 31st (Friday Evening)

8:00 pm BOD Meeting in Best Western, Lake County Inn & Suites, Tavares

TENTATIVE PROGRAM

Nov 1st (Saturday)

8:00 – 8:30 Registration and Visit vendors

8:30 – 8:45 Welcome and Introductions

8:45 – 9:30 Greg Mihalic, Director of Tourism, Lake County, promotional programs available for Agri-Tourism Farms (Choose and Cut Christmas Tree Farms)

9:30 – 10:00 Vendor Show and Tell

Break and visit with Vendors

10:00 - 10:45 Jack Ewing, Agri-Tourism at Santa's Christmas Tree Forest, Trees 4 Troop 2007, Directions to farm.

10:45 - 11:30 Mike Rinck, President, Agri-Starts, Expert on tissue culture. Clone Christmas Trees?

11:30 –12:30 Catered lunch at conference room.

12:30 –12:50 Travel to Agri-Starts, 19825 SR 44, Eustis, for tour.

12:50 –1:50 Tour Agi-Starts

1:50 – 2:05 Travel to Santa's Christmas Tree Forest

2:05 – 4:30 Tour Santa's Christmas Tree Forest

EVENING PROGRAM

6:00 – till Catered banquet at conference center.

Speaker to be announced.

Nov 2nd (SUNDAY MORNING)

9:00 – 9:45 General membership meeting and Russ Whited's update on NCTA.

9:45 – Till Tree talk.