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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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ARIZONA ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION – APRIL 26, 2013

Phoenix, Arizona, April 23, 2013 – The Arizona State Forester Scott Hunt and Arizona State Forestry Division (ASFD) will celebrate the 141st National Arbor Day on **Friday, April 26, 2013**. They will host a statewide Arbor Day event in collaboration with the Arizona Community Tree Council, Arizona Nursery Association, Bureau of Land Management, USDA Forest Service, and Granada Primary School.

The celebration is scheduled to occur at the Arizona House of Representatives lawn from 7:00AM – 11:00AM and will include an urban arborist climbing demonstration with representatives from The Tree Amigos of Mesa and Arizona Public Service Utility Foresters of Phoenix. The tree climbing demonstrations will be followed by the reading of the Governor's Arizona Arbor Day Proclamation, the annual Tree City USA award ceremony, and the planting of four trees.

Arizona Arbor Day

As early as 1898, Arizona celebrated Arbor Day through specialized events held at each of the public schools and institutions of learning. In the 1980s, the Arizona State Legislature declared the "last Friday in April" to be the official Arizona Arbor Day throughout the state, recommending that the day be observed through tree planting to promote urban forest health and growth.

Arizona State Forestry Division – Urban & Community Forestry Program also takes this opportunity to recognize communities across Arizona and their commitment to proactive tree stewardship.

History of Arbor Day

Arbor Day was first celebrated in Nebraska on April 10, 1872. As the Nebraska Territory was being populated in the mid to late 1800's, a need for trees was quickly realized. Trees aided in soil stabilization, provided shade from the sun, and supplied fuel and building materials. Encouraging the planting of trees came strongly from the "founding father" of Arbor Day, J. Sterling Morton.

Since 1872, Arbor Day is now celebrated in all 50 states and in 32 countries around the world. The most common date for Arbor Day is the last Friday in April, although some states celebrate on different dates that coincide with the best time to plant trees based on the local climate.

Why is Arbor Day Important?

As J. Sterling Morton and many others have realized, the importance of trees is immeasurable as they provide a multitude of social, environmental, and economic benefits. *Socially*, trees can lift our spirits and create serene environments for stress release and aesthetic viewing pleasure. *Environmentally*, they help cool our communities by providing shade from the sun, improve air quality by sequestering carbon dioxide and other air pollutants, and reduce storm water runoff by intercepting rainfall. *Economically*, a tree shading a building will cut costs associated with air conditioning, a landscaped building is more valuable than one that is non-landscaped, and trees aid in increasing home/property values.

For more information on National Arbor Day: www.arborday.org

For more information on Project Partners:

Arizona Community Tree Council: www.aztrees.org

Arizona State Forestry Division: www.azsf.az.gov

Arizona Nursery Association: www.azna.org

Bureau of Land Management: www.blm.gov

USDA Forest Service – Urban & Community Forestry: www.fs.fed.us/ucf/

END