



## Wayne NF Tree kicks off Marietta, Ohio's holiday season

*The Wayne NF donated the city of Marietta, Ohio's official Christmas Tree.*



A crowd braves the cold on December 1 to celebrate the lighting of the city's Christmas Tree.

"It's the first time that we've donated the town's Christmas tree," said Dave Greenwood, Realty Specialist on the Athens District. "The Mayor asked us last spring and it just seemed like the right thing to do."

Greenwood said he'd been watching for a tree and the 25-foot Christmas tree selected was a blue spruce from the front yard of a recently acquired property in Monroe County. It stood in front of an old house and quite likely had served as a living Christmas in other years. The tree was the focus of a lighting ceremony on December 1, 2006.

Forester Jason Reed represented the Wayne at the ceremony and was thanked by Marietta Mayor Michael Mullen for donating the tree. The Friday evening ceremony in front of the National Guard Armory served as a kickoff to the holiday season for local people.

A fairly large group of couples and families braved the sudden drop in temperature to see the traditional event and enjoy the entertainment. "It may not have looked like Christmas but it sure did feel like it," said Becky Stewart, Information Assistant. Stewart was there with her family. "Everyone was in the spirit of the season despite the cold," she said, "Youth from the Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club came dressed as elves and went through the crowd making a list for Santa of what people wanted for Christmas."

Stewart noted, "All the city was able to manage were the lights. We had a high wind advisory for the day. Gusts reached 50 to 60 mph so any further decorating of the tree was put on hold for later." She said the lights alone looked beautiful and once decorated she's sure the tree will make the Wayne proud.

Warren Local High School's hand-bell group performed Christmas songs as well as Marietta High's Premiere show choir. People were also encouraged to shop in the 20 to 30 businesses in Marietta that kept their doors open until midnight after the ceremony.

Greenwood said it was the second time he had been involved with a Christmas tree from the Wayne. In 1987 the Wayne sent the Capitol Christmas Tree to Washington DC. The 1987 tree, a Norway spruce was also in the front yard of a house acquired when the Wayne purchased the

property.

Greenwood is one of the few people left on the Wayne who also worked on the 1987 Christmas tree. "It made me feel a bit old though when Jason Reed said he'd been involved in the 1987 tree as well," said Greenwood. "Jason was 8 years old at the time and his third grade glass at Newport School was one of the schools that made ornaments to adorn the tree that went to the capitol in Washington DC!"

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