FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Wednesday, December 22, 2010

MAYOR BLOOMBERG PLANTS “SURVIVOR TREE” AT 9/11 MEMORIAL, RETURNING THE TREE TO WTC SITE AS A SIGN OF RESILIENCE AND REBIRTH

Milestone Reached with Completion of Structural Steel Work on Museum Pavilion

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, 9/11 Memorial President Joe Daniels, Department of Parks and Recreation Commissioner Adrian Benepe and Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Executive Director Chris Ward today planted the “Survivor Tree,” marking its homecoming to the World Trade Center site. Bloomberg, who is Chairman of the 9/11 Memorial, also announced the completion of structural steel for the 9/11 Memorial Museum Pavilion.

9/11 survivors Keating Crown, Tom Canavan and Ret. FDNY Lt. Mickey Kross also attended the planting of the Survivor Tree.

The callery pear tree became known as the Survivor Tree after sustaining extensive damage, but living through the September 11, 2001, terror attacks at the World Trade Center. In October 2001, the tree with lifeless limbs, snapped roots and blackened trunk was discovered and freed from the piles of smoldering rubble in the plaza of the World Trade Center. The tree was originally planted in the 1970s in the vicinity of buildings four and five in the WTC complex near Church Street.

The damaged tree measured eight-feet tall when it arrived in November 2001 at the Parks Department’s Arthur Ross Nursery in Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx. It was nursed back to health and today has grown to a height of about 30 feet. The tree returned to the site this morning from Van Cortlandt Park by a flatbed truck.

“The presence of the Survivor Tree on the Memorial Plaza will symbolize New York City’s and this nation’s resilience after the attacks,” Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg said. “Like the thousands of courageous stories of survival that arose from the ashes of the World Trade Center, the story of this tree also will live on and inspire many.”

“This stalwart pear tree is a living symbol for everyone who survived the terrorist attacks and everyone around the world who has shown strength and resilience in the face of devastation,” 9/11 Memorial President Joe Daniels said. “I’m grateful to all of the dedicated people who worked to nurse this tree back to health, allowing millions of future 9/11 Memorial visitors to experience its beauty and power.”

“The Port Authority’s highest priority is delivering on our commitment to open the 9/11 Memorial by the tenth anniversary of the attacks,” Port Authority Executive Director Chris Ward said. “The completion of the Memorial Pavilion steel is one more tangible sign that we are making progress toward that commitment.”

“The return of the survivor tree to the World Trade Center is a symbol of our collective resilience in the face of adversity and the healing powers of nature,” said Parks & Recreation Commissioner Adrian Benepe. “Once twisted, blackened and near death from the inferno of the 9/11 attacks, the tree now stands beautiful and thriving. I am grateful to all of the Parks Department employees who carefully nursed the tree back to health at the Arthur Ross Nursery in Van Cortlandt Park.”
Upon the tree’s arrival at the Arthur Ross Nursery, its damaged limbs were pruned, leaving primarily a blackened trunk with a tiny root system to be planted. Year by year, with the tender care and attention of the nursery staff, the tree has grown to greater and greater height, filling in with numerous branches and bountiful leaf cover.

In March 2010, the tree endured another traumatic experience after being uprooted in powerful storms that swept through New York. The tree again showed it was a survivor. Caretakers righted the tree, examined its roots, pruned its branches, and secured it with cables.

Recently, the nursery and 9/11 Memorial staff partnered to ensure the tree’s limbs were properly pruned in preparation for its return to the World Trade Center. Its root ball was also prepared so the tree could be safely moved to its home on the Memorial Plaza. The tree’s vitality is a true testament to its determination to survive, thrive and grow.

The Survivor Tree will continue to grow among dozens of swamp white oak trees that have been planted on the Memorial Plaza since Aug. 28. When the Memorial is fully complete, more than 400 trees will line its Plaza, which features a complex soil supported paving surface and unique cistern system designed to sustain the urban forest. Currently, 124 trees, including the Survivor Tree, are planted on the Plaza.

9/11 survivors Crown, Canavan and Kross helped to plant the tree.

Crown, who serves on the 9/11 Memorial board, worked at AON Corporation and had reached the 78th floor when the second airliner struck the South Tower. Injured, he survived the impact and took the stairwell to the ground level to escape.

Canavan was working on the 47th floor for First Union Bank in the North Tower when the building was struck. He survived after being trapped when the building collapsed.

Ret. FDNY Lt. Kross of New York City’s Engine Company 16, Ladder 7, joined other fellow firefighters in responding to a call a plane struck the World Trade Center towers. He was one of 14 people trapped within a staircase, but survived the collapse of the North Tower.

MUSEUM PAVILION STRUCTURAL STEEL INSTALLATION COMPLETED

With about 1,187 tons of structural steel, the Museum Pavilion’s primary steel installation is complete. The Pavilion, which was designed by Norwegian architecture firm Snøhetta, is located between the acre-sized twin reflecting pools on the northeast section of the Memorial Plaza.

Visitors will enter the Museum through the Pavilion, which will include an auditorium, a café, and other public services. It will also contain a private suite for victims’ families.

The Pavilion will be a graceful steel and glass building with an atrium revealing two massive steel “tridents.” The seven-story, three-pronged steel columns were once part of the original façade of the Twin Towers, and were installed in September 2010 inside the Pavilion as the structure continues to be built around them.

The Museum is expected to open a year following the Memorial, in September of 2012.
ABOUT THE NATIONAL SEPTEMBER 11 MEMORIAL & MUSEUM

The National September 11 Memorial & Museum is the not-for-profit corporation created to oversee the design, raise the funds, and program and operate the Memorial & Museum at the World Trade Center site. The Memorial & Museum will be located on eight of the 16 acres of the site.

The Memorial will remember and honor the nearly 3,000 people who died in the horrific attacks of February 26, 1993, and September 11, 2001. The design, created by Michael Arad and Peter Walker, consists of two pools formed in the footprints of the original Twin Towers and a plaza of trees.

The Museum will display monumental artifacts linked to the events of September 11, while presenting intimate stories of loss, compassion, reckoning and recovery that are central to telling the story of the 2001 attacks and the aftermath. It will communicate key messages that embrace both the specificity and the universal implications of the events of 9/11; document the impact of those events on individual lives, as well as on local, national, and international communities; and explore the continuing significance of these events for our global community.

Donations can be made through and more information can be found at the Memorial & Museum’s website, www.national911memorial.org.

Contact:

9/11 Memorial,
Lynn Rasic/Michael Frazier (212)312-8800

Mayor Bloomberg,
Stu Loeser / Andrew Brent (212) 788-2958

Parks Department,
Vickie Karp/Phil Abramson (212) 360-1311

Port Authority,
Steve Coleman (212) 435-7777

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