From: Farrell, Robert
To: DOF-ALL EMPLOYEES
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Hello everyone;

It looked like winter around here this morning with some snow on the deck and on the grass. Check out this week's Branch to read about the health benefits premium holiday this month and to see all the personnel news of promotions and transfers and new hires as well as a well-earned retirement. Congratulations to everyone on their new roles.

I got to have some fun last week - not that this job isn't fun, every single day. On Tuesday I helped the Jefferson work area team cut and deliver the Christmas Tree to the State Capitol. This year's tree was provided by John Carroll (former VDOF deputy state forester) and his family from their farm in Louisa County. David Powell did the felling, new area foresters Jonah Fielding and Michael Downey helped get it wrapped up, John loaded it with his tractor and Michael and I delivered it to the Capitol. Of course, since this is 2020 it couldn't all go smoothly. When the crew from the Dept. of General Services was standing it up in the Capitol Portico the crane hook was lowered into the tree and broke the top off. Then one of the tie downs slipped out of the buckle and the whole tree fell over. They had to have the crane stand it up again, fortunately without incident. During the lighting ceremony Wednesday night, you couldn't tell that the top of the tree was attached with wire.

Even more fun was the SAF Skyline Chapter firewood cutting on Friday morning in Madison. Michael Downey and Adam Downing (extension forester) arranged this annual event. VDOF participants included Ed Zimmer, Rodney Newlin, Matthew Hutchins, and Jonah Fielding. Herb Reynolds (another DOF retiree) had felled a very big and very dead oak for us to convert into firewood for a local family. Coffee, donuts, and chainsaws - as much fun as you can have and still call it forestry.

Hope you all have a great week.

Rob Farrell
State Forester
Virginia Department of Forestry

Headquarters
900 Natural Resources Drive, #800
Charlottesville, VA 22903
office (434) 220-9047

cell (757) 810-6943
fax (434) 220-9140

rob.farrell@dof.virginia.gov

www.dof.virginia.gov