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Norwalk To Light First Christmas Tree in 30 Years

by [Richard Weizel](#) (email) 7 hours ago

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Norwalk's Christmas tree is raised recently at its final destination on Washington Street. The tree lighting will take place at 6:30 p.m. Thursday.

Photo Credit: [Nancy Chapman](#)

NORWALK, Conn. – When Santa Claus comes to town this year, he will find South Norwalk much brighter than during any holiday season of the past three decades.

That's because at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, the city will hold its first official Christmas tree lighting in nearly 30 years and illuminate Norwalk through New Year's Day. The tree is set up at 50 Washington St., near the Metro-North train station.

"This tree brings a sense of community to the downtown, and everyone is really excited to have a holiday tradition be reborn," said Ken Hughes, Norwalk parks superintendent who helped arrange and coordinate the project. The Parks Department also decorated the tree with LED lights and 300 large ornaments and topped it with a star.

No one is sure why there hasn't been an official tree lighting since the early 1980s, but that will change when 3,000 lights on the 40-foot evergreen will be switched on. The ceremony will include refreshments and performances by local bands, groups and choruses.

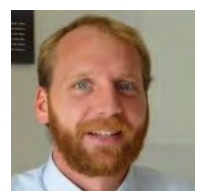
It took the work of many individuals, groups and businesses to make it happen.

Colin and Nicole Grotheer decided they wanted to take down the nearly half-century pine that took up nearly the entire front yard of their West Rocks Road home and donate it to the city.

"This year, Eric Rains from the SoNo Collaborative mentioned he wanted to get a tree put up in SoNo," said Colin Grotheer, who works for a SoNo architecture firm. "I told him we had one that might work."

Recently, workers from Almstead Tree and Shrub Care in Stamford removed the massive tree. They hoisted it over utility wires with a crane and onto a

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To make it all possible, Rains contacted Norwalk Parks Director Mike Mocciaie. "The SoNo Collaborative is a nonprofit group dedicated to bringing events to the area," said Rains. "The city used to have its tree [in SoNo] for years, but that ended in the '80s. We thought this was a good time to bring back the tradition." The tree's holiday home is in a small park in front of the newly renovated Averick building.

Bob Bociek, managing arborist for the Connecticut branch of Almstead, said it was important to take the tree down safely and put it up properly so it would last through the holidays.

"There's no better time than the holiday season to bring some cheer to the community," said Bociek. "Our crew was happy to be involved with this project, and we know it will help people share in the holiday spirit."

Bociek said Almstead worked alongside A&A Crane and Rigging and FGB Construction to cut down the tree, safely maneuver it around telephone wires and transport it the SoNo park.

"It was amazing to watch these crews work, and the SoNo community is so excited about having this beautiful tree," said Stacey Hascoe, assistant director of the SoNo Corporate Center at 50 Washington St. "It's helping to change the dynamic of the downtown. We want people to know how much SoNo has to offer, and this will help make it a destination city."

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