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MEDIA RELEASE

COMMUNITY BENEFITS FROM FORESTRY EVENT.

Proceeds from the Tasmanian Forest Festival, held in Geeston earlier this year, have today been distributed, including to the 2007 major beneficiary – the Huon Valley SES to purchase much needed training equipment to provide volunteers with the skills and qualifications to undertake a wide range of emergency situations.

The donation has been used to purchase a data projector, LCD television, DVD/ VCR player and laptop computer. The addition of these valuable resources will increase the efficiency of the unit and its members.

Purchased equipment will also be used for debriefing after rescues especially where trauma is involved and for public education in the promotion of community safety. Community education is of huge importance, especially with the high road tolls in Tasmania, not only in the Huon Valley but across the State.

Chairman of the 2007 Tasmanian Forest Festival, Mr Roger Browne said "this year's event was our biggest and best yet. We have directly distributed over \$8,500 today, however this does not include the indirect benefits to local business providers such as accommodation, meals and attractions. We are pleased to each year be able to make a significant contribution to the community."

Unit Manager of the Huon SES, Mark Dance said he was delighted with the new equipment. "The Huon Valley State Emergency Service unit provides a number of response capabilities for road crash rescue, severe storm and flood support, search and rescue/recovery and a range of other general rescue and community support roles."

"The Unit is the second highest activated unit within the southern district. The response area ranges from Lower Longley through to Cackle Creek and around the Channel area and to Verona Sands. In addition to the operational responses, the unit also undertakes community education seminars at our headquarters with the aim of promoting road and general road safety." Mr Dance said.

Mr Dance added "Our members are our most important asset, and to continue to support and train them is of the utmost importance. The support we have received from this year's Tasmanian Forest Festival will help us achieve this goal."

Other community groups to benefit from the Forest Festival include the Variety Club of Tasmania, the Huon PCYC, the Kermantie Football Club, Franklin Fire Brigade, Geeston District High School, St James College, Geeston Fire Brigade, Huon Scouts and Geeston Guides.

The 2008 event is scheduled for Sunday 30th March. Details of the 2008 event will be released later this year and will be available on the festival's website, including details on expressions of interest for the 2008 Beneficiary.

All correspondence to: The Secretary, Tasmanian Forest Festival, PO Box 229, Geeston Tas 7116.
www.tasmanianforestfestival.com

The Tasmanian Forest Festival is a registered business name and is organised through the Forest and Heritage Centre Inc. (ABN 71 275 199 334).

Additional information:

What was once a tiny timber town is now a bustling tourist hub, Geeveston was a natural choice to host the Tasmanian Forest Festival which in 2007 featured multi-award winning country music artist Adam Harvey in concert teamed with a Tasmanian wide Tilford Ute muster and convoy. Adding to the excitement of 2007 was the inaugural Huon Wood Centre's International Chainsaw Carving Grand Prix, sponsored by Echo, which drew competitors from as far a field as New Zealand, Germany and the USA, as part of the 2007 festival. The winning carving by Deborah Lloyd of New Zealand is on permanent display at the Forest and Heritage Centre in Geeveston.

This year, the festival committee for the first time advertised for expressions of interest from community and not-for profit organisations for a suitable organisation to receive the majority of the proceeds. In line with its statewide focus, advertisements were placed in regional newspapers last year and on the Festival's web site - with selection criteria established.

To keep the process as independent as possible, the Committee sought a selection panel, of Terry Edwards, Chief Executive Officer of the Forest Industries Association of Tasmania, Stuart Thorn, Chairman of Huon Valley Financial Services and Huon Valley Mayor, Robert Armstrong.

After advertising, the Committee received seven worthy applications from qualifying organisations seeking consideration as our 2007 beneficiary.

The successful beneficiary was announced in March as the Huon Valley SES. Their proposal was to purchase training equipment to ensure that their volunteers were trained with the essential skills and qualifications needed to undertake a wide range of emergency situations.

The Huon Valley SES unit consists of 20 dedicated members who volunteer their time to this service. In order to provide support not only community education seminars to the wider community, but also continue to train their existing and new members, and provide invaluable debriefing sessions to their members after incidents, the service requires some technical infrastructure.

For further information, please contact

Roger Browne, Chairman,
Phone 6297 1836 or 0428 571 524

Tammy Price, Event Secretary
Phone 0418 320 129