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Chattanooga, TN – The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) will host its 25th annual meeting in Chattanooga this weekend at the Sheraton Read House.

Marshal Case, President and CEO of TACF said, “We are celebrating our 25th anniversary this year—a year to celebrate the past and to look forward to the next 25 years of success. As we celebrate very significant progress and receive increasing national attention, we must continue to build on the momentum and energy which have been cornerstones of our science program and our growth as a national organization.”

This year, TACF and the U.S. Department of Interior’s Office of Surface Mining will sign a Memorandum of Understanding that will help improve coal mined land reclamation efforts involving planting American chestnut trees on reclaimed land. The signing takes place Saturday morning at 10:00 a.m.

Tree-growers, scientists, state government officials as well as chapter members from around the country will meet to discuss the current status and the future of that most beloved of trees – the American chestnut. During the two-day event, attendees will learn about restoration efforts with regard to coal mined land reclamation, TACF’s partnership with the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace which received five chestnuts grown in Chattanooga and a keynote address from Tennessee Naturalist Mack Prichard.

At one time, the American chestnut was the dominant tree in forests from Maine, south through Georgia and west to the Ohio valley. Both wildlife and rural families depended on the nuts, as did the livestock of most farmers. And chestnut provided timber unrivaled in quality. Straight-grained and strong, chestnut lumber went into everything from furniture, to barns to telephone poles. But billions of trees were destroyed as the result of a blight that was introduced into the United States in the early 1900’s and TACF is hoping to bring the tree back to its former glory.

The American Chestnut Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with chapters in 17 states. TACF was established in 1983 with the sole purpose of restoring this majestic tree to its native forests in the

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eastern United States, and the Foundation has supported the efforts of scientists who are working to develop a blight-resistant American chestnut. For more information about the Foundation or the Tennessee chapter, please visit our website at www.acf.org.

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