



**MEDIA CONTACT:** Laura Soll (860) 688-4499, cell (860) 833-4466

## **GRAND MARSHALS ANNOUNCED FOR 2008 CONNECTICUT VETERANS DAY PARADE Raymond Necci and Paul Pendergast to Lead Largest Veterans Parade in New England**

**HARTFORD, CONN., June 25, 2008** – Two influential Connecticut business leaders who are longtime supporters of U.S. veterans have been named the **Grand Marshals** of the **2008 Connecticut Veterans Day Parade**. This year's top honors go to **Raymond P. Necci, President and Chief Operating Officer of The Connecticut Light and Power Company and Yankee Gas**, and **Paul F. Pendergast, President and Chief Development Officer for Saint Francis Hospital & Medical Center** in Hartford. Several Honorary Grand Marshals will be announced during the coming months. The ninth annual statewide parade will step off on **Sunday, November 2** at 1 p.m. near the Connecticut State Capitol Building in Hartford and will proceed for 1.26 miles through the Downtown area.

"Dozens of CL&P and Yankee Gas employees look forward to this event annually," says Raymond P. Necci, President and Chief Operating Officer of The Connecticut Light and Power Company (CL&P) and Yankee Gas Services Company (Yankee Gas), two of Northeast Utilities' (NU) operating companies. "I sincerely thank the Veterans Day parade organizers for this honor and encourage everyone to come out and help salute our veterans that day." CL&P has been a major sponsor of the Connecticut Veterans Day Parade since the event was established in 2000, and a unit of employees who are veterans and supporters march every year. Necci sits on a variety of industry boards, is Chairman of the Board of Directors of the United Way of the Capital Area and is a member of the Board of the United Way of Southeastern Connecticut. For the past two years, the Glastonbury, Conn. resident has provided leadership support to Operation Fuel, helping raise over \$200,000 in 2007. He has volunteered with the Special Olympics of Connecticut for more than 20 years.

"The brave men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces have for many years given their all to protect the lives of our citizens and the very foundation of our country's freedom," explains Paul F. Pendergast, President and Chief Development Officer for Saint Francis Hospital & Medical Center. "It is an honor to walk with them in this parade and to celebrate one of the great American holidays, Veterans Day." The Bloomfield, Conn. resident is a Vietnam-era U.S. Air Force veteran, honorably discharged with the rank of Sergeant. Pendergast works with the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs on various projects to help veterans who live in the state, and is a member of the Connecticut Veterans Day Parade Executive Committee. He is involved in many health industry and philanthropic committees and endeavors, serves on several community and civic boards, and helps other organizations raise money to help those in desperate need of funding.

The Connecticut Veterans Day Parade in Hartford has become the largest event of its kind in New England. Last year's parade featured nearly 4,000 marchers and the 2008 event is expected to be even larger. Special features will include flyovers by military aircraft, and a tolling of church bells and Moment of Silence when the parade will pause in observance of veterans who died while serving their country. The marching bands of the University of Connecticut and Central Connecticut State University will join high school and middle school marching bands, and pipe & drum and fife & drum corps from all over the state in the procession.

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The Connecticut Veterans Day Parade honors the dedication and sacrifices of servicemen and women from all U.S. conflicts, and offers the state's residents the opportunity to express their thanks. This year, as we observe the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War I, the 60th anniversary of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, and the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Connecticut Second Company Governor's Horse Guard, the parade promises to be most memorable.

Veterans are encouraged to sign up now to march. Any Connecticut resident who is an active, retired or honorably discharged member of the U.S. Armed Forces including commissioned officers, warrant officers and enlisted personnel of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, National Guard, and Reserves is welcome to participate. Parade organizers also seek veterans groups, patriotic commissions, local municipalities, and middle, high school, college and university marching bands and drill teams from throughout the state.

The 1.26-mile parade will begin near the Connecticut State Capitol at the intersection of Buckingham St. and Washington St., travel north down Trinity Street and through the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch, go right onto Asylum Street, and make a right onto Main Street where it will pass a reviewing stand across from the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, and finally make a right onto Capitol Avenue where it will end. The event is expected to last for 2 to 2 ½ hours.

**The Connecticut Veterans Day Parade is organized by** a collaboration of veterans' groups, corporations, local municipalities, businesses and civic organizations, and is administered by the Greater Hartford Arts Council. The Connecticut National Guard manages all parade logistics, and the City of Hartford hosts the event. Last year, nearly 4,000 veterans from all over Connecticut took part in the parade, with tens of thousands of spectators cheering them on.

Parade organizers **are seeking sponsors** to help pay for the event. **To date, Title Sponsors include:** Aetna; Connecticut Light & Power; the Connecticut National Guard; Hartford Steam Boiler; the State of Connecticut, United Technologies; and WDRC Radio. **Associate Sponsors include:** Bank of America; Colt Defense; the Greater Hartford Arts Council; The Hartford Courant; ING; Kaman Corporation; Prudential Financial; and Travelers. **The parade is produced in cooperation with:** Bob's Discount Furniture; the City of Hartford; the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs; Pratt & Whitney; Rockville Bank; Saint Francis Hospital & Medical Center; and the Exchange Club of Rockville. **In Kind Sponsors include:** American Medical Response; Greater Hartford Jaycees; Monaco Ford; Mr. Trophy; R2 Graphics; and United Paint & Wallpaper.

To **march** or **volunteer** in the Connecticut Veterans Day Parade, or to learn more about **becoming a parade sponsor**, visit [www.ctveteransdayparade.org](http://www.ctveteransdayparade.org) or call the Parade Information Line at **(860) 724-2649 ext. 23**.

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