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**San Jose, California** – To celebrate the Ethiopian New Year and to honor the Ethiopian flag, the leaders and members of the Ethiopian American Council (EAC) are encouraging all Ethiopians, Ethiopian-Americans, and their friends and families to join them at the Ninth Annual Ceremonial Ethiopian Flag Raising at New City Hall of San Jose on Friday, September 6, at 4:00 p.m..

The flag raising will mark the beginning of a week-long celebration of the Ethiopian New Year. This special civic ceremony is a salute to the Ethiopian flag and a heartfelt remembrance of Ethiopian roots and heritage. San Jose is the only city in the nation to have established this traditional, annual acknowledgment of the heritage and history of Ethiopian-Americans. When the Ethiopian flag was first flown over New City Hall in 2005, it was an historical event in that no other foreign flag had been so honored in the history of the city.

The San Jose City Mayor, Vice-Mayor, and City Council Members will be in attendance. The EAC and the Ethiopian-American community at large are extremely appreciative of the time and the energy that city officials have devoted to this annual event. The United States and the City of San Jose have become welcoming and nurturing homes for countless members of the Ethiopian Diaspora. Because of the friendly American environment, our young people are flourishing. The ceremony will also honor entities that have helped.

The Young Ethio Jazz Band, under the leadership of Sirak Tegebaru, is becoming more professional and skilled everyday. The San Jose Maleda Soccer Team, consisting of 120 youngsters ranging in age from five-to-fifteen years, has enjoyed much well-earned success. AB's Pre-School has been serving the Ethiopian community for 10 years and has assisted countless families by helping their youngsters move skillfully through American society while still retaining an appreciation of the Ethiopian homeland.

The Annual Ethiopian Flag Raising Festival is a celebratory event that gives Ethiopians, Ethiopian Americans, their families, and their supporters the chance to come together, not only to celebrate the New Year of the Ethiopian calendar, but also to stir the love of Ethiopia within the hearts of Ethiopians, so they will never forget their roots even though they may be far away from their motherland.

Last year, protests were lodged by the Ethiopian Consulate General in Los Angeles, and a Palo Alto business man because Ethiopians and Ethiopian Americans chose to use the Ethiopian Heritage Flag rather than the flag used by the current ruling party. The Ethiopian Heritage Flag is simply a three-color banner of green, yellow, and red. Red represents the blood of Ethiopian patriots, yellow the peace and harmony between Ethiopia's various ethnic and religious groups, and green symbolizes hope, or the land and its fertility.

This flag does not signify any particular regime nor political party and is most revered by members of the Ethiopian Diaspora, especially Ethiopian-Americans. American institutions, churches, and community

centers, especially here in San Jose, use this flag. Flags are supposed to be a source of unity and need not exalt any particular political purpose or program. Our three-color Ethiopian Heritage Flag is a source of identity to all Ethiopians regardless of their political fealty.

The Ethiopian Heritage flag has never flown under the banners of conquering colonial powers, so it is a symbol of pride to Ethiopians and Ethiopian-Americans, and a symbol of hope for other African nations as they struggle for self-governance and liberty. The EAC is extending thanks to the citizens of San Jose for their recognition of the diversity that has made this country so great, and for offering the Ethiopian-American community a time and place to come together and take pride in their heritage.

The EAC is encouraging other Ethiopian-Americans who are living in different states to do the same in their cities. Ethiopians and their friends and families who are living in the Bay Area are urged to dress in green, yellow, and red, and come celebrate with the societies and civic leaders at the flag raising and join them in the festivities that will follow.

Ethiopians, Ethiopian-Americans, and friends of Ethiopians will be stirred by this historic event that celebrates the flag, the nation, and the heritage of Ethiopia. The EAC and the civic leaders of San Jose are inviting all citizens to share in this solemn and celebratory ceremony at New City Hall, located at 200 East Santa Clara Street in San Jose on Friday, September 6, at 4:00 p.m..

May God bless the United States of America!