

**Virginia Zoological Society
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***Three Little Piggies Come to Town
The Red River Hogs Have Arrived!***

For Immediate Release – News Flash

Norfolk, Virginia: We're living high on the hog at the Virginia Zoo...

Three little piggies (*Potamochoerus Porcus*) arrived in Norfolk from the San Diego Wild Animal Park. These three male litter mates, born September 20, 2001, are from the rain forest of Central Africa.

To see a Red River Hog is to witness a true marvel of nature. With their bright orange fur, shovel-shaped snouts, pointy ears and tufts of hair sticking in all directions, they're comical poetry in motion.

Red River Hogs live in groups called "sounders" made of 15-100 hogs. They love to forage along the forest floor like living vacuum cleaners, happily snorting up anything tasty. Favorite morsels include roots, seeds and dung beetles.

Join us in celebrating this fascinating addition to the Okavango River Delta. The Okavango Delta Exhibit was constructed at a cost of \$15.8 million and covers 8 acres. Join us over the next few months as we celebrate the arrival of giraffe, lions, meerkats and more!

It's Big.....It's Africa Big.....

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For: Immediate Release

Africa Arrives!

Norfolk, Virginia: We've got the **Big Stuff!** And it's coming right at you beginning May 4th with the opening of the Virginia Zoo's Okavango Delta. Lions, Rhinos, Zebra, Red River Hogs and Gazelle will be on hand to greet you May 4th beginning at 10:00 am. During the summer months, Masi Giraffe will become the newest residents of Norfolk's African Savannah, along with other surprise guests!

On May 3, 2002, beginning at 6:00 am, media representatives will broadcast live from locations throughout Africa, with the opportunity to interview Norfolk Mayor Paul Fraim, animal staff, docents, volunteers, Zoo supporters, and international designer Ace Torre. Zoo members will be treated to a sneak peak of Africa, beginning at 10:00 am. Throughout the day, members will be offered special treats and performances by the Zulu Connection from New Orleans, Louisiana, Phil Deal Dance Project and Ronald McDonald Magic Shows. Students from Bay View Elementary will perform at 12:00 noon, singing "*Windows to Your World*", written by Eric Worden and Michael Goldberg with MAGIC. *Aerial Photo Opportunity: At 12:00 noon, these children will also outline Africa in the colors of Botswana.*

On May 4th and 5th, the Zoo will open at 10:00 am. Giveaways will be offered to patrons and a variety of exotic entertainers will invade the Zoo. Academy of Music, Beleeza Drummers, the Hurrah Players, Young Audiences of Virginia, Carl Jackson, American Jazz Ensemble, United States Continental Army Band Dixie Land Bank, Rainbow Puppets, Music of the People, Uhuru Dancers, Virginia Ballet Theatre, Ancestral Footprints: A Celebration of Life, Atumpan Tales of the Griot, Daniel Smith-Llera;

Visual Masks, African Drumming and Storytelling, DNH/Synergy, Pam Goode, Urban Arts Ensemble, Charles lark, MAGIC, Governor's School for the Arts, Norfolk Public Schools, Rhythm Project, Voices of Norfolk, Sylvia Tabb-Lee, Zulu Connection Dancers, Clowns Face-painting and Jugglers! Area organizations will be on site with creative, interactive displays such as the Virginia Marine Science Museum, the Botanical Garden, Chrysler Museum of Art, the Recreation Bureau's Visual Arts Center, Portsmouth Childrens Museum, Ernie Morgan Environmental Center, Hampton Roads USO, Jr. Scientists, NAUTICUS, District 1 State Parks, and the USS Wisconsin, just to name a few.

See attached for an entertainment schedule!

An important note to all: Please use the park and ride on Monticello Avenue – Lot 39! On-site parking is very limited. There will be free shuttle service for all Zoo visitors to ride to and from Lot 39, running continuously on May 4th and 5th!

It's Big. It's Africa Big. The Okavango Delta Opens May 4th!

Virginia Zoo Okavango Delta exhibit Quick Facts

Pronunciation key:

- Okavango (*Oak uh von go*)
 - Xaxaba (Kuh *Kah* buh)
 - Tsodilo (So *dee* lo)
-
- Located in the northwest corner of the Zoo grounds, the Okavango Delta African plains exhibit covers 8 acres.
 - The Okavango Delta exhibit was constructed at a cost of \$15.8 million.
 - Designed by Azeo "Ace" Torre of Design Consortium Limited, New Orleans, and Mid Eastern Builders of Chesapeake constructed the exhibit.
 - This is the first of five continental exhibits to be developed at the Virginia Zoo. Africa was the first choice due to the high profile of the animals that will be included, and the long-term Animal Care plan for the Zoo. In addition, the remote location was an unoccupied area in which construction would cause minimal disruption of the visitor experience.
 - The designer, Ace Torre, in light of the unique ecological "story" that will be conveyed to the visitor, selected the theme "Okavango Delta". The seasonal changes of the Delta make for an interesting story exploring the environmental, cultural and conservation issues of the region.
 - Botswana's Okavango Delta is the largest inland delta in the world.
 - Our new residents of the exhibit are:
 - Our Ostrich
 - Our Sitatunga, Timba
 - Our Bongos, Big Boss, Esi, MeMe and a new baby (to be named in animal naming contest)
 - Our African Elephants, Monica and Lisa
 - Our Southern White Rhinoceros Rufus, Jessie and Alfred
 - Our Grant's Zebra, Zeke
 - Our African Rock Python, Medusa
 - Our Gelda Baboons, Tommy, Joe and Hoss
 - Our Crowned Cranes, Gopu and Suki
 - Our Pancake Tortoise
 - Our Rock Hyrax
 - Our Egyptian Geese

- We will also be adding many new animals throughout the summer, including:
 - Masai Giraffe (to be named in the animal naming contest)
 - African Lions (to be named in the animal naming contest)
 - Meerkats
 - Taveta Golden Weaver
 - Lilac-Breasted Roller
 - Brush-tail Porcupine
 - White Throated Monitor Lizard
 - Dik-Dik
 - Von der Deckin's hornbill
 - Duiker
 - Red River Hogs
 - Kudu
 - Gazelles

- Modeled upon an actual Village in Botswana, Xaxaba includes features that are common to villages of Botswana. Some of these features include: granaries, a child's sleeping loft, a reed drying rack and animal shelters.

- The reed thatching on the village structures is authentic. With the exception of the restaurant roof, the material used is Cape Town reed and was constructed by Zulu craftsmen who traveled from South Africa to install them.

- Students from Old Dominion University painted the artistry on the Safari Shop. The students researched tribal symbols and designs common in the Delta and reproduced them on the shop's exterior wall.

- The "mud" walkway contains plant and animal tracks. Plant material, native to Africa, was pressed into the wet concrete by our Horticulturists and removed before the finishing.

- The containment for the animals are unique to each yard and each animal.
 - The giraffe and ostrich yard uses a variety of fencing and natural barriers.
 - The elephant yard and house include massive hydraulic gates, turnstiles, fencing, and hot wires that allow selective access to the yards and facilities.
 - The lion yard makes use of a cantilever banked concrete moat, 600-pound double paned glass, and high-tension stainless steel wire.
 - The rhino and zebra yard uses a moat and cable fencing.
 - The Tsodilo Hills exhibits include moats and glass.

- Cemrock of Tucson constructed the rockwork throughout the exhibit. The process began with reinforcing bar shaped to the general form of the rock. Backing material, such as wire mesh and corrugated plastic, was installed to provide support. Concrete was then sprayed over the reinforcing material to give the rock form. Artists then shaped the crevices and contours as the concrete dried. The textured rocks were then covered with acrylic latex paints.

- The moats throughout the exhibit are poured concrete over hundreds of 50-foot piles driven deep into the ground to support the moat.
- The termite mounds in the elephant yard and on the visitor walkway are also concrete, and were included because of their important role in the ecology of the Okavango Delta.
- The elephant pool contains large, wide steps so that Monica and Lisa may submerge themselves in their 18-foot deep pool. The pool will be drained and refilled weekly.
- The plantings throughout the exhibit were selected to create a naturalistic environment replicating the trees, flowers and grasses of the Delta. The Zoo's Horticulturists will maintain the landscaping. The plantings above the Tsodilo Hills rocks makes use of a sprinkler system.
- The facilities for the lions, rhinos and elephants were constructed to sustain a Category 5 hurricane and are among the most heavily reinforced structures in Hampton Roads. Additionally, the lion nighthouse contains resting benches that will keep the animals above the surge in a major storm.
- One can imagine the disastrous effects of the lions swimming or jumping across the moat and entering the zebra yard. This is, in fact, impossible due to the width of the moat and the height of its cantilevered banks.
- Plans are in the works to include a variety of graphics, interactive activities mini-exhibits, and programs to help the visitor interpret the information the exhibit presents. These are to be introduced throughout the exhibit's inaugural year.

Virginia Zoo

Virginia Zoo Education Complex and Visitor Center Quick Facts

- The 23,000+ square foot Education Complex and Visitor Center will house “living classrooms” for education programs, retail space, ticket booths, the zoo exit/entryway, Member Services center, administrative offices, and boardroom.
- The Complex is being constructed with a budget of \$6 million.
- The Victorian-style building was designed by Azeo “Ace” Torre of Design Consortium, Ltd. and built by Chianelli Building Corporation.
- The Orientation Plaza welcomes visitors on a large compass of multi-colored concrete paving stones. Several fountains will complement the space with benches lining the perimeter.
- A central feature of the plaza is the Kugel Ball. This 6-foot granite globe will be perched on a stream of water that will allow it to spin. The Kugel Ball and its base together weigh approximately 26,000 pounds. Constructed in Germany, it will be set in place by a special crane.
- Ticket booths will be situated in an open-air entryway making up the central portion of the buildings first floor.
- The new gift shop on the first floor will include a larger selection of books and items featuring animal, conservation and environmental themes.
- The much-needed classrooms and education space will accommodate the large school groups that often schedule zoo education programs. The partition separating the classrooms can be removed to create a single, spacious room for large groups and special programs. The space includes a warming kitchen for programs requiring food preparation, holding space for animals involved in the programs, and ample storage space for program materials and supplies.

Virginia Zoo

VIRGINIA ZOO

Okavango Delta exhibit Message Points

- *The magnitude:* The exhibit is the largest expansion in the Zoo's history and introduces the animals that the public most want to see.
- *The vision:* The exhibit is the first step in a Master Plan that will present five continents. North America will be the second step.
- *The need:* The exhibit brings a modern, state-of-the-art zoo experience to the state and to the region.
- *Importance:* The exhibit lays the groundwork to support conservation efforts at the Zoo.

Virginia Zoo

THE VIRGINIA ZOO

*A partnership between the City of Norfolk and
Virginia Zoological Society*

QUICK POINTS

Summary

- The Virginia Zoo is located on 53 acres adjacent to Norfolk's historic Lafayette Park and bordered by the Lafayette River.
- Currently, the Zoo houses approximately 350 animals representing about 115 species. Attendance in 2001 was 223,000. More than 35,000 schoolchildren participate in the Zoo's wildlife education programs annually. More than 5,000 households participate in the Zoo's membership program.
- The Zoo's total operating budget (including both City and Society operating expenses) is \$3.1 million. Annual revenue from gate sales and Society operations is \$1.58 million.
- The Commonwealth of Virginia has supported the Zoo's education program with up to \$150,000 per year. The Commonwealth has reduced its support to only \$50,000 for fiscal year 2001 and ***no support was provided for fiscal year 2002***. The Zoological Society has requested \$1 million in capital funding and \$450,000 in education program funding from the state for fiscal years 2002-2004.
- The Zoo was established in 1901 (when it began obtaining "zoological specimens on exhibit") as a City Park. In 1974, the animal area was fenced off and named Lafayette Zoological Park. The Zoo was renamed The Virginia Zoological Park at Norfolk (or, The Virginia Zoo) in 1985.
- The Virginia Zoo has been accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association since 1987. Mill Mountain Zoo in Roanoke, VA is the only other accredited zoo in Virginia. (Mill Mountain is significantly smaller in size and attendance: 3 developed acres and 1999 attendance of 66,000)
- In 1993, the Virginia Zoological Society and the City of Norfolk developed a Master Plan to revitalize and expand The Virginia Zoo. The Master Plan is being implemented by New Orleans based Design Consortium, Ltd., led by architect Azeo Torre. Design Consortium has designed award-winning exhibits for the Audubon Zoo and the Memphis Zoo, among others. Once the Virginia Zoo's Master Plan is completed, the Zoo will house animals from five continents in one of the only purely zoogeographic layouts in the country.
- Phase I of the Zoo's expansion project is centered on a representation of Africa's Okavango Delta, the largest inland delta in the world. This 8 acre exhibit will introduce fifteen new species and over sixty new individual animals to the Zoo. New to the exhibit will be:

Giraffe	African Lion	Gazelle
Marabou Stork	Springbok	Taveta Golden Weaver
Lilac-breasted Roller	Brush-tail Porcupine	Meerkat
African Elephants	Pancake Tortoise	Duiker
Southern White Rhinoceros	East African Crowned Crane	Ostriches
Rock Hyrax	Plated Lizard	Hornbills
Egyptian Geese	Bongo	Gelada Baboon
Monitor Lizard	Rock Python	Grant's Zebra

A red river hog exhibit was added to the project in May, 2001 at a cost of Approximately \$500,000 and is scheduled to open with the Okavango Delta exhibit in Spring 2002.

A male elephant facility (\$1.5 million), and ape exhibit (\$3-\$5 million) are also planned for inclusion in Africa, but will require additional funding and are not part of the current project.

Status

- The primary path, which will link all zoo continent exhibits, was completed in September 1998.
- Part I of Phase I, consisting of the Xaxaba Village (restaurant, artifacts, lighted walkway and plants), Gelada baboon habitat, and the primary moat, was completed in the summer of 1999. On the hot 4th of July weekend 1999, more than 6,100 people attended the opening of the Gelada baboon habitat and Xaxaba Village, demonstrating strong community interest in the project and further expansion.
- The Virginia Zoological Society has raised more than \$9 million in private sector funds toward zoo expansion. The City of Norfolk, through FY01, has provided more than \$12 million. The Commonwealth appropriated \$550,000 to the zoo's expansion in 1997, but no additional state funds have been received for zoo expansion since then.
- Part II of Phase I, consisting of the Okavango Delta exhibit's animal paddocks and housing structures, moat system, artificial rockwork, waterfall, raised visitor walkway and smaller exhibits, is currently under construction. The opening of the completed Okavango Delta exhibit is Spring 2002. The total cost for the Okavango Delta exhibit is \$15.8 million and all funds have been secured. (This total does not include the planned male elephant facility, or ape exhibit).
- Part III of Phase I, the Education and Entry Complex, began in February 2001. The Education and Entry Complex is a \$6.5 million, state-of-the-art facility that will house education classrooms, an open-air entryway, visitor welcome center, gift shop, conference room, and administrative offices. Additional funds must be secured to complete the Education and Entry Complex. Overwhelming community support raised \$500,000 for the complex as a direct result of an anonymous challenge made in December 2000.

Timetable

- The *Okavango Delta* entry plaza and African village of Xaxaba (Island of the Tall Trees) provide an overlook for viewing construction of the remainder of the Delta. The *Okavango Delta* exhibit will open on May 4, 2002.
- The Zoo broke ground on the Education and Entry Complex on February 17th, 2001 and the facility is scheduled to open in 2002.
- A planning team for the next phase of expansion, the *North America* continent exhibit, has been assembled and meets biweekly. The design firm for the North America exhibit was selected in early 2002 and is Design Consortium, Ltd., the firm that designed the *Okavango Delta* exhibit and the Education Complex & Visitor Center.
- Plans for an onsite conservation center and traveling exhibit hall are currently being explored. This multi-purpose facility will serve as an active learning environment where students of all ages will have access to zoo conservation biologists while they work.

Wildlife.
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Beyond Africa: Planning for the future...

With the opening of the 8-acre Africa *Okavango Delta* exhibit this May and the Education Complex and Visitor Center soon after, the Virginia Zoo will be well on its way to becoming a world-class zoo.

But it doesn't stop with Africa. We have begun the detailed planning for the next phase of the Master Plan, the *North America* continent exhibit. A planning team of 35 including Zoo staff, volunteers, and board members was assembled in early September and has begun the Concept Design stage of the planning for *North America*. To date, the team has approved a "Big Idea" for the exhibit and a species list and exhibit theme is currently under discussion. A design firm has been selected and development of the project is in progress.

Also in the works is the planning for a new botanical Conservatory, featuring butterflies and an impressive orchid collection as well as a Conservation Center, where zoo visitors, schoolchildren and scientists-in-training will have access to Zoo conservation biologists while they work.

These exciting additions to the Zoo will capitalize on the momentum for expansion and improvement that the Africa exhibit brings and, we hope, place the Zoo on the fast-track to becoming one of the nation's premier zoos.

Welcome to the future of the Virginia Zoo.