



MEDIA RELEASE

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Anderson and Knox County Mayors Visit Little Ponderosa Zoo

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.— Little Ponderosa Zoo Director James Cox said that on any other day, in any other Spring, the parking lots of Little Ponderosa Zoo and Rescue would be full, and a line would be forming to gain entrance to the facility before it opened. Today, Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs and Anderson County Mayor Terry Frank and a few Ponderosa Zoo board members and staff were all alone.

Keeping their commitment to work across county borders to promote economic recovery in the region, Mayor Jacobs and Mayor Frank visited the facility to tour and hear more about the operation and its current situation. As they walked, Mr. Cox introduced the mayors to animals in both the regular exhibits and the rehabilitation facility. Many animals approached their fences and vocally welcomed the troupe of visitors and it was evident they are as eager for a return to normal as the staff is.

Wilbebeests, kangaroos, zebras, tigers, birds and goats all looked on as Mr. Cox shared a small glimpse of what the cost of a ticket would provide a zoo patron. Additionally, he shared a little about opportunities available at a slightly extra cost including the mile-and-a-half feeding trail, playing zookeeper for a day and special up-close animal interactions.

As a 501(c)3 non-profit exotic animal rescue and zoo located in Clinton, Tennessee, Little Ponderosa Zoo garners much of its funding from ticket sales. This time of year, most of those sales come from school field trips. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Little Ponderosa reported the cancellation of 40 school field trips in the first week of the state-issued school closures.

“We suffered a great loss with a devastating fire several years ago,” said Mr. Cox. “Our construction is finished, and we’ve made some fun new additions to the zoo. This was going to be our year to get everything back where we want it to be.”

Providing rescue and rehabilitation services for animals of all kinds and unique educational opportunities for families and students, Little Ponderosa Zoo was eager to premier new exhibits and activities, including a plexiglass tunnel that would allow some visitors to crawl right through the middle of the wolf habitat. Zoo staff is working hard to stay positive, care for the animals and keep everything running but the facility would benefit greatly from community support.

“I know that a lot of people stepped up to help us after the fire and we hate to be asking for more at a time like this,” said Mr. Cox. “But we do need all the help we can get.”

The zoo is currently working on a plan to reopen as soon as they can meet appropriate health guidelines. To donate, visit their website or call the facility to see how you can help.

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