

Henry Vilas Park Zoological Society

Since 1914, the member-supported fundraising organization for our zoo.

For Immediate Release:

March 11, 2005

For more information, contact:

Amy Lensing 608-258-9490

zooamy@sbcglobal.net

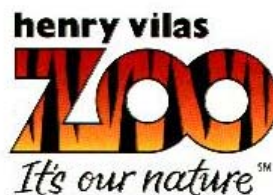
'Zoo Century' Campaign Unveiled

Ten Year, \$27 Million Dollar Plan to Renovate Our Free Zoo. First Major Renovations to be Artic Passage Exhibit and Children's Zoo.

(MADISON, WI) It is with great excitement and enthusiasm that the Henry Vilas Park Zoological Society commences its *Zoo Century* campaign. The *Zoo Century* fundraising campaign has a financial goal of \$27 million over 10 years, all to support major renovations at the Henry Vilas Zoo.

With *Zoo Century*, the Henry Vilas Zoo and the Zoological Society are embarking on an incredibly ambitious venture. "We are confident that our shared vision for the Henry Vilas Zoo, as it approaches its 100th Anniversary, is inspiring and worthy of this incredible community asset," said Keith Oleson, Board President of the Zoological Society. Mr. Olesen expressed the confidence of the Society in attaining its fundraising goal, "I want to pledge to all the generous donors, Society members, volunteers and families of Dane County that the Society is prepared to help shape a great future for the Zoo." The Zoological Society Board of Directors has approved a campaign business plan, and a Board Committee of dedicated and experienced volunteers is leading the campaign implementation.

--MORE--



(PAGE 2- ZOO CENTURY)

"As stewards of your generosity, the Zoological Society remains dedicated to its supportive role, and we are pleased to be a leader in ensuring a bright future for the Henry Vilas Zoo, so that future generations of children and grandchildren can experience the amazement, wonderment, and delight that have been part of visits to the Zoo for nearly 100 years," said Mark Schemmel, Executive Director of the Zoological Society.

As of March 1, 2005, the Zoological Society has secured gifts or commitments of \$2.35 million for Zoo renovations. Dane County and the City of Madison have also committed \$5 million starting in 2006. The first two major renovation projects identified in the *Zoo Century* campaign are a new Arctic Passage exhibit (polar bears/seals/reindeer/snow owl) and a completely redesigned Children's Zoo. The Arctic Passage will provide visitors a journey that will educate and entertain. Visitors will see free swimming harbor seals, a replica iceberg, a replica of a ship used to research in the arctic, a place to watch the reindeer, and incredible viewing of the polar bears on land, in the water and under water. Zoo Director Jim Hubing describes the new exhibit, "There's enough natural habitat to encourage natural behavior so that our visitors are going to see animals the way they live." Dane County and the City of Madison have committed \$4.5 to the Arctic Passage, and the Swiss Colony Foundation has already generously provided \$200,000.

Another immediate priority is to build a new Children's Zoo. Led by a gift of \$2 million from the Oscar Rennebohm Foundation, this complete renovation of the Children's Zoo will include a Conservation Carousel, year-round interactive exhibits, and new indoor and outdoor classrooms for the over 30,000 children who annually attend animal education programs at the Zoo. The Arctic Passage exhibit and renovated Children's Zoo are only the first phases of redevelopment. With the support of the community, the resulting redevelopment could very well become a model for zoo renovations around the world.

The Henry Vilas Park Zoological Society has been the Henry Vilas Zoo's member-supported fundraising organization since 1914. The Zoological Society promotes the Zoo's mission to conserve and protect the wonders of the living natural world, to build an understanding by people of animals by promoting conservation, and to provide high quality recreational and educational experiences to over 500,000 annual visitors.

###