



Henry Vilas Park Zoological Society
606 S. Randall Ave
258-9490 phone, 258-1490 fax



For Immediate Release:
January 19, 2006

For more information, contact:
Amy Lensing 608-258-9490 zooamy@sbcglobal.net

Henry Vilas Park Zoological Society Receives Charity Navigator 4-Star Rating

Less than a quarter of charities rated earn this top honor

(Madison, WI)— Henry Vilas Park Zoological Society has been recognized as a 4-star charity by Charity Navigator, the largest charity evaluator in America. The organization guides intelligent giving by evaluating the financial health of over 5,000 charities and providing information on their Web site, <http://www.charitynavigator.org>.

“This evaluation highlights precisely the financial and operational efficiencies that the Zoological Society continually strives to achieve,” stated Executive Director Mark Schemmel. “We are committed to acting as responsible stewards of the community’s support and are pleased to be identified by Charity Navigator as a top-rated organization among thousands of nonprofits.”

The rating comes as the Zoological Society is engaged in a major renovation campaign, the *Zoo Century*. The ultimate fundraising goal of \$27 million dollars over ten years will support a series of new exhibits and improvements at the Zoo. The first phase is a new habitat for the polar bears and seals and a completely new Children’s Zoo.

Charity Navigator Executive Director Trent Stamp stated, “We are happy to announce that Henry Vilas Park Zoological Society has earned a 4-star rating for its ability to efficiently allocate and grow its finances. Less than a quarter of the charities we’ve rated have received our highest rating, indicating that the Zoological Society outperforms most charities in America in its efforts to operate in the most fiscally responsible way possible. This ‘exceptional’ rating from Charity Navigator differentiates Henry Vilas Park Zoological Society from its peers and proves that it’s worthy of the public’s trust.”

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. For more information visit vilaszoo.org.

###