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Phoenix Zoo to Break Ground on New Veterinary Medical Center *Care Meets Conservation*

PHOENIX (February 28, 2025) – The Arizona Center for Nature Conservation (ACNC)/Phoenix Zoo is excited to break ground on the highly anticipated Veterinary Medical Center, encompassing the Midwestern University Zoological Institute and the JoEllen and Philip Doornbos Veterinary Student Center. The groundbreaking will take place on Thursday, March 6, 2025, at the future site of the facility along the Zoo’s Outer Africa Trail. This milestone marks a significant step forward in the Zoo’s commitment to cutting-edge animal care, conservation and education.

The new 27,000-square-foot Veterinary Medical Center is expected to be completed in late 2026 and will provide state-of-the-art medical facilities, advanced diagnostic equipment and clinical research space to support the health and wellbeing of the Zoo’s diverse animal collection.

The \$25 million campaign to fund the project is nearing completion, with \$23.9 million already raised through generous contributions from philanthropic foundations, corporations and individuals. Sundt Construction, Inc. has most graciously pledged its support by building the project at cost, significantly reducing overall expenses.

“We are incredibly grateful to all the project supporters, organizations, individuals and Zoo members who have come forward to make this vision a reality,” says Bert Castro, President and CEO of the Phoenix Zoo. “Their unwavering commitment and belief in our mission have made it possible for us to create a world-class veterinary facility that will not only enhance the care of our beloved animal residents but also serve as a center for education. This project reflects what we can achieve together as a community, ensuring a brighter future for wildlife at the Phoenix Zoo and beyond.”

Care at the new facility will be provided by the Zoo’s veterinary team, along with 4th year veterinary students from the College of Veterinary Medicine at Midwestern University, a private not-for-profit graduate university in Glendale specializing in the health sciences. The College has been a dedicated Zoo partner since 2013. It graduates more than 100 new veterinarians each year and houses three community animal clinics on site, including the Companion Animal Clinic, Large Animal Center and Diagnostic Pathology Center.

“This facility will not only enhance our veterinary capabilities but also serve as a dynamic learning environment for the next generation of wildlife veterinarians. Through our collaboration spanning more than a decade already with Midwestern University, veterinary students will continue to have the invaluable opportunity to train alongside our experienced veterinary team,

gaining hands-on experience in zoological medicine while deepening their understanding of conservation and animal stewardship,” says Dr. Gary West, DVM, Senior Vice President of Animal Health and Collection at the Phoenix Zoo.

“Midwestern University is a proud partner of the Phoenix Zoo. Our long-standing relationship between the Zoo and the Midwestern University College of Veterinary Medicine is a testament to our mutual commitment to animal welfare, outstanding care and education. This new facility will enhance educational opportunities as an extension to our commitment to the community,” said President and Chief Executive Officer of Midwestern University, Dr. Kathleen H. Goepfinger.

Among the notable features of the expanded facility are indoor viewing windows and digital screens that will allow guests to observe veterinary exams and procedures in real time, providing an immersive educational experience. The building will be two stories high and will also have staff office space. Additionally, the Center will include classrooms and collaborative workspaces to train the next generation of wildlife veterinarians, fostering a culture of excellence and innovation. A classroom on the first level will be available for informal learning opportunities, including the Zoo’s camp curriculum; hosting elementary school-aged children throughout the year, engaging them in age-appropriate lessons related to animal care.

The Veterinary Medical Center will be built next to the current Arthur L. and Elaine V. Johnson Conservation Center. Due to the proximity and areas of focus of the Veterinary Medical Center and existing Johnson Conservation Center, the centers will jointly be enveloped into The Joyce Corrigan Animal Care & Conservation Campus, supported by The Kemper and Ethel Marley Foundation and Robert Kemper Corrigan Foundation.

Donations to round out the campaign can be made on the Zoo’s website and through this direct donation link: <https://iqfn.us/form/lx4VVQ>

About the Arizona Center for Nature Conservation

The Arizona Center for Nature Conservation operates the Phoenix Zoo. The ACNC advances the stewardship and conservation of animals and their habitats while providing experiences that inspire people and motivate them to care for the natural world.

The Phoenix Zoo is the only zoo in the Valley accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and is a non-profit zoological park, serving 1.4 million guests annually. The Zoo is home to more than 3,000 animals, many of which are endangered and threatened species. For information on upcoming events, exhibits and activities at the Phoenix Zoo, visit www.phoenixzoo.org.

Midwestern University is a private, not-for-profit graduate and postgraduate educational institution specializing in the health sciences with 13 colleges located on two campuses. The Illinois campus, located on a 105-acre site in Downers Grove, is home to nearly 3,000 students and the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine; the College of Pharmacy, Downers Grove; the College of Health Sciences, Downers Grove; the College of Dental Medicine-Illinois; the Chicago College of Optometry; the College of Graduate Studies, Downers Grove, and the proposed College of Veterinary Medicine-Illinois. The Arizona campus, located on a 156-acre site in Glendale, is home to over 3,900 students and the Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine; the College of Pharmacy, Glendale; the College of Health Sciences, Glendale; the College of Dental Medicine-Arizona; the Arizona College of Optometry; the College of Veterinary Medicine; the College of Graduate Studies, Glendale; and the Arizona College of Podiatric Medicine. The University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission, a Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. For more information, visit <http://www.midwestern.edu> or call 630-515-7300.