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CONTACT:

Linda Hardwick
VP of Marketing, Communications & Events
lhawick@phoenixzoo.org
602.663.3254

Phoenix Zoo Advances Construction of State-of-the-Art Veterinary Medical Center with Support from Thunderbirds Charities

PHOENIX (June 12, 2025) - The Arizona Center for Nature Conservation (ACNC)/Phoenix Zoo is pleased to share continued progress on its new, state-of-the-art Veterinary Medical Center. The Veterinary Medical Center encompasses the Midwestern University Zoological Medical Institute, and the JoEllen and Philip Doornbos Veterinary Student Center, all within The Kemper and Ethel Marley Foundation Animal Care & Conservation Campus.

A transformative gift from Thunderbirds Charities, the charitable giving arm of The Thunderbirds – hosts of the WM Phoenix Open – has provided significant support to this endeavor. Thunderbird Charities awarded the Phoenix Zoo a generous \$500,000 grant in support of the new medical center. This investment reflects Thunderbirds Charities' enduring commitment to improving the quality of life for all Arizonans, including through enhanced access to education and community enrichment.

Construction began in May of 2025, marking a significant step forward in advancing zoological medicine and animal care in Arizona. This 27,000+ square-foot facility will serve as a critical resource for the Zoo's animal population, many of which are rare or endangered, while also acting as a regional hub for education, veterinary training and public engagement.

"We are grateful to Thunderbirds Charities for their leadership and generosity," said Bert Castro, President and CEO of the Phoenix Zoo. "Their support helps ensure we remain at the forefront of animal health and wellness, and their investment in our future will positively impact generations of animals, students and Zoo guests."

The Veterinary Medical Center will replace the current Joyce Corrigan Memorial Care Center, which has served the Zoo for more than 50 years. With modernized equipment, expanded treatment areas and enhanced capacity for in-hospital care, the new facility is designed to meet the needs of over 3,000 animals from nearly 400 species. Key features include:

- Public viewing opportunities which allow guests to observe select medical procedures and learn about animal care and conservation.
- Expanded teaching capacity to host veterinary students and professionals seeking hands-on experience in zoological medicine.
- Increased diagnostic capabilities, including a CT scanner – making the Phoenix Zoo one of the few zoological facilities in the nation equipped with this technology.

In recognition of their gift, the Zoo is proud to designate the Laboratory within the new facility as generously funded by Thunderbirds Charities. This space will serve as a vital hub for veterinary education and engagement, aligning with the mission of Thunderbirds Charities to support impactful educational initiatives.

The Phoenix Zoo anticipates the Veterinary Medical Center will be completed in Fall 2026. For more information or to support the campaign, please visit [Veterinary Medical Center - Phoenix Zoo](#).

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.