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MEDIA CONTACT:

Kelly Thompson
Marketing & Development Coordinator
Office: 325-437-4692
E-mail: Kelly.thompson@abilenetx.com

Giraffe bridge makes way for new exhibit

ABILENE, TEXAS –The historic giraffe feeding bridge will be demolished Friday morning to make way for the new \$3.8 million Giraffe Safari exhibit.

The 50-year-old bridge was award winning in its day, and has long been a guest favorite at the Abilene Zoo. In recent years, it has proven to be safety hazard and is not up to American with Disabilities Act standards.

“This is an exciting moment in construction of the new giraffe exhibit,” said Bill Gersonde, executive director of the Abilene Zoo. “A new feeding deck will replace the bridge, where guests can make eye-to-eye contact with these popular animals.”

The new exhibit will be completed in the fall of 2015. The giraffe will stay in holding yards off exhibit during the construction of the new space.

In October, the zoo acquired a new bull giraffe from the Little Rock Zoo. Named Mesi, the nine-year-old male is a good genetic match for the zoo’s two female reticulated giraffe, according to the Association of Zoos & Aquariums Species Survival Program. The new exhibit will double the space of the old exhibit and allow the zoo to start a breeding program.

About the Abilene Zoo: The Abilene Zoo is home to more than 900 animals from 250 species. The Zoo offers many educational programs and kid’s activities, including camps, birthday parties and Behind the Scenes Tours. The Abilene Zoo is open 7 days a week (closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year’s Day) from 9 am to 5 pm. Last admittance is 4 p.m. Tickets are \$6 for adults, \$3.50 for children ages 3-12, \$5 for seniors aged 60+. Members are admitted free. Memberships start at \$30. www.abilenezoo.org. 325-676-6085.