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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Voters decide name for new Alligator Snapping Turtle**

**ABILENE, TEXAS** – The Abilene Zoo’s new Alligator Snapping Turtle will be christened Beauregard, a Cajun name in honor of the animal’s natural habitat in the Southeastern United States. Beauregard means “beautiful gaze” in French.

Voters decided between three names, and the election was tight between the names Geronimo and Beauregard, but the latter won out by a handful of votes. Close to 300 zoo guests cast ballots in the contest.

The 37-year-old turtle is new to Abilene from the San Antonio Zoo. Beauregard weighs about 150 pounds and is 3 ½ feet long. Alligator Snapping Turtles are the largest species of freshwater turtle in the world and typically live to 70 years old in captivity.

The large turtle now is on exhibit at the zoo’s Elm Creek Backyard building.

Seven-year-old Ben Thomas of Abilene won the drawing for a \$50 gift card to the Zoo Store. His name was drawn from the pile of ballots cast for the winning name.

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#### **About the Abilene Zoo:**

The Abilene Zoo is home to more than 900 animals from 250 species. The Zoo offers many educational programs and kids’ 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 a.m. to 5 p.m. 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](http://www.abilenezoo.org). 325-676-6085. During the summer months, the zoo is open every Thursday until 9 p.m., with admission ending at 8:30 p.m.