



---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****March 3, 2015****MEDIA CONTACT:**

Kelly Thompson  
Marketing & Development Coordinator  
Office: 325-437-4692  
E-mail: [kelly.thompson@abilenetx.com](mailto:kelly.thompson@abilenetx.com)

**Voters name zoo's two new camels***Duo to start camel strolls through zoo this weekend*

The zoo's two new female camels are now named Dakota and Sahara.

The four-month-old female dromedary camels are new to the zoo from a Texas camel farm. The pair will go on exhibit and start daily walkthroughs of the zoo starting this weekend. Camel walks will take place at 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. beginning Saturday.

"We're thrilled to bring this new species to the Abilene Zoo," said Executive Director Bill Gersonde. "We know our guests will enjoy learning about these unique ships of the desert."



Voters chose Dakota from a selection of three names for one female. The name is derived from the name of a Native American tribe and the location where the oldest camel fossil in North America was found.

Sahara, the name of a desert in North Africa, was chosen as a name for the second female.

Cooper High School student Eli Dods and David Perkins of Abilene won the naming contest drawing. Those two winners will be awarded a special one-on-one interactive experience with the camels this weekend.

The Abilene Zoo is home to more than 900 animals from 250 species. The zoo is open 7 days a week (closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and 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. This summer, the zoo will be open every Thursday until 9 p.m.

*Mission Statement: The Abilene Zoo is a place of learning and adventure, where families make memories, share the joy of discovery and become inspired to preserve wildlife.*