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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Zoo opens Wildlife Carousel, Karibu Outpost**

**ABILENE, TEXAS** – The zoo is opening two new attractions for the holiday weekend. The long-awaited Wildlife Carousel officially will open Saturday, July 4, offering zoo guests a chance to ride the merry-go-round animal of their choice on the city’s first permanent carousel.

Also opening for the holiday weekend is a new exhibit and party space: Karibu Outpost. It’s a building with a long history that has been repurposed and given a new name. Karibu (ka-ree-boo) means “welcome” in Swahili.

“This newly updated facility includes an exhibit of African birds and educational displays including a recreated giraffe vertebrae,” said Zoo Director Bill Gersonde. “It’s also climate controlled -- making it a perfect stop off for cooling down during a zoo visit.”

The building, located in the southwest corner of the zoo, was a concession stand in the 60s and has had a variety of uses over the years, including offices and classrooms, quarantine space for reptiles and, most recently, storage. It’s now a colorful room with a view of the lake and can seat up to 50 people for meetings, birthday parties or other events.

The Abilene Zoo is home to more than 900 animals of 250 different 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. with last admittance at 8 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.*