



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Sept. 11, 2016****MEDIA CONTACT:**

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Giraffe Calf is Born

ABILENE, TEXAS – Following months of anticipation, the Abilene Zoo is pleased to announce the birth of a healthy male giraffe calf to first-time mom, Punk, Saturday, Sept. 10.

“Labor started at about 3 p.m., and the calf arrived at 4:56 p.m.,” said Zoo Director Bill Gersonde. “The calf stood and began nursing approximately one hour later.”

Zoo staff were on hand to assist if necessary, but labor and delivery occurred without complication in an off-exhibit yard in the zoo's new Giraffe Safari.

"We have Punk and the baby separate from the herd, allowing the opportunity for mom and calf to bond. If all goes as planned the baby will receive its first physical on Monday or Tuesday," says Zoo Veterinarian Dr. Stephanie Carle. “Once zoo staff determine that mother and calf have bonded, they will slowly introduce them to the other females and youngster Kito, and then finally to the father, Mesi. No date has been set for when the baby will make its public debut.

"It depends on how introductions to the other giraffe go. We'll have a better idea of when baby is ready to go into the exhibit after we observe him and the other giraffe while they become familiar," Carle said.

This birth was the result of a breeding recommendation made by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' Giraffe Specie Survival Plans.

About the Abilene Zoo:

Since its founding in 1966, the Abilene Zoo has stood as a place of learning and adventure, where visitors make memories, share the joy of discovery and become inspired to preserve wildlife.

Situated on 16 acres in the award-winning Grover Nelson Park, the zoo has more than 1000 animals of 270 species from around the globe. The zoo is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Last admittance is 4

p.m. The zoo is open until 9 p.m. each Thursday all summer, with last admittance at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$4.50 for children ages 3-12, \$6 for seniors aged 60 and older. Members are admitted free. www.abilenezoo.org. 325-676-6085.

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.*