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PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

Chimpanzees at Potawatomi Zoo Moved to Grand Rapids Zoo

The pair of chimpanzees that have lived Potawatomi Zoo headed for a new home last week. Female chimpanzee, Jody, and male chimpanzee, Sammy, were transferred to the John Ball Zoo in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where they'll enjoy a larger exhibit area and a spacious indoor/outdoor habitat.

Potawatomi Zoo carefully weighed the decision to move the chimps and has spent the better part of the past year working out every detail. The move also had been recommended by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums' (AZA) Chimpanzee Species Survival Plan Committee (SSP), which guides the long-term care and placement of endangered chimpanzees at zoos throughout North America.

"It's difficult to see these chimps leave the Zoo, but they're going to a great home," said Zoo Director Terry DeRosa. "We're going to do everything we can to make sure they have a smooth transition, and we're confident that this move is in the best interest of the chimps."

Sammy and Jody are long-time residents of the Zoo. Jody, age 21, was born at Potawatomi Zoo and Sammy, age 30, was captive born at Kansas City Zoo and came to Potawatomi Zoo in 1992.

Zoo staff accompanied the chimpanzees on their road trip to John Ball and will stay with them for a short time as they adjust to their new home. There, they will join five other chimps; four females and one male. Sammy has been given three breeding recommendations through the chimpanzee SSP, another positive reason for the move.

The space used by Sammy and Jody will be used as a larger exhibit for the Zoo's Colobus monkeys, which will in turn provide a more spacious exhibit for the DeBrazza and Diana monkeys.

Potawatomi Zoo is currently upgrading several exhibits in preparation for the 2009 AZA accreditation. As part of the upgrades the current chimpanzee exhibit will be renovated to eventually house a troop of five to six chimpanzees, per the SSP recommendation, as the Zoo hopes to one day return chimpanzees to its collection.

"While we are in the process of upgrading infrastructure to prepare for accreditation, we are renovating the existing chimp exhibit with the hopes that we will one day have chimps again. This process could

take several years," Zoological Society Director Marcy Dean said. "Our chimps will live in an incredible facility at John Ball, the breeding recommendation is fantastic and they will enjoy the company of five other chimps, which is both wonderful and healthy for Sammy and Jody."

The Zoological Society membership program currently reciprocates one hundred percent with John Ball, meaning Society members can visit Sammy and Jody at John Ball through the reciprocal program free of charge. John Ball Zoo is just over two hours north of Potawatomi Zoo in Michigan. After a several week quarantine period and introductions to their new troop Sammy and Jody will be on exhibit.

Native to the rainforests and mountain forests of Africa, chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*) are listed as endangered because of habitat loss, the live animal trade and the fact that they are hunted for meat. While more than a million chimps once roamed 25 countries in Africa, now fewer than 200,000 remain in the wild, spanning just four countries.

Nationwide, 275 chimps live at 37 zoos across the United States.

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