

08

THE JACKSON

ZOO

ANNUAL
REPORT



FROM THE DIRECTOR



This past year was designated as Year of the Frog by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and other conservation groups. Frogs, salamanders, and newts are going extinct, and it is predicted that at least one-third of known amphibian species are in danger of disappearing for good; serving as a warning of the peril all species face. We were focused in highlighting the plight of these smaller members of the animal kingdom with a new display of frogs here at the Jackson Zoo. The frog display will be here for the coming year as well and will, along with the rest of our collection, draw attention to conservation efforts, both global and local.

The Jackson Zoo continues to leap forward with many changes and improvements; not only in the animal collection but in the buildings and grounds as well. This past year saw the addition of a display for a growing Amur leopard cub, new space for Red River Hogs, and the exciting birth of a tapir. With the assistance of Tyson Foods, Inc., Safari Club International – Magnolia Chapter, and zoo supporters Wm. Davis Frye and Laurie Hearin McRee, the contact area was re-opened this year. Children have been delighted to get close to pygmy goats, many different breeds of chickens and young pot-bellied pigs. The walk-through aviary is also open again with the addition of peach faced love birds.

A large education leap is the construction of the Gertrude C Ford Education Building. Located in the Wilderness Mississippi area of the Zoo, this structure will have new offices for education staff, security staff and our zoo docents. Two new classrooms will be welcomed by area school teachers and a large conference room will be available for meetings. The lobby of this facility will be filled with interactive displays for both school children and daily visitors, and is slated for opening in August.

We also leaped into 2008 with more special events for our visitors, including a new music series at the zoo for the spring and fall. Zoo Music is held on Sunday afternoons, with Blues, Jazz or Gospel guests. A first time fundraising event called Zoo Brew was well received and will return in 2009. The Jackson Zoo also is leaping outside its boundaries working with ZAPP (Zoo Area Progressive Partnership). The ZAPP group has adopted the corner on Parkside for landscaping, and assists with many other projects to beautify the West Jackson neighborhood.

We want to again express our appreciation to all that help us including the Board of Directors of Jackson Zoological Society, Inc., the Jackson Zoo Foundation and the City of Jackson. Thanks also to the many businesses that make all types of unique contributions to the Jackson Zoo through out the year. Special thanks go to our Docents, Junior Docents and the many volunteers who help out again and again.

Happy Birthday wishes are in order with the Zoo turning 90 in 2009! Some of the many surprises for the upcoming year include a new exhibit for tigers later in the year and a special exhibit just for the summer of penguins opening in mid-March. With on-going changes and partnerships, the Jackson Zoo will continue to accomplish great things.



JACKSON ZOO EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Education is at the core of the mission of all AZA institutions, and the Jackson Zoo strives for excellence in conservation education. The department offers programs for school groups and students including guided tours, classes, and the ZooMobile outreach program. The department also offers an overnight program for scout groups and church youth groups. All of the education department's programs are aligned with state of Mississippi curriculum frameworks, and we work closely with local educators to ensure we are meeting the educational needs of students and teachers.

2008 was a year of many changes for the Education Department. Under the leadership of a new Education Curator, several new programs were implemented while older programs were redeveloped. In the spring, a new registration system was put in place for school groups making reservations for field trips and/or education programs. Our new system has greatly streamlined the admissions process for teachers and their students. A new Teacher Advisory Board was assembled in the spring to gather input from local educators, and the first "Zoo Education Open House" was held in September for area teachers to sample the zoo's education programs. The department also acquired a new ZooMobile van in October thanks to a generous donation from Trustmark Bank.

Perhaps the most significant event of 2008 for the Jackson Zoo was the groundbreaking for the new Gertrude C. Ford Education Center. The construction of the building will be completed early in 2009 and the center's "Magnificent Mississippi" exhibit hall will open to the public in the fall. A great deal of

planning has been put into the new exhibit hall that will be featured in the center and it will serve as a centerpiece for the Wilderness Mississippi area of the zoo. In addition to the exhibit hall and office/workspace for education staff, the new Gertrude C. Ford Education Center has two dedicated classrooms which will allow us to host more groups and offer more programs. Our current classroom is a multi-purpose room and serves many of the zoo's meeting and special events needs. This often creates scheduling difficulties, and we are very much looking forward to having dedicated education spaces. The new center will also house an expanded zoo library which will be available to zoo staff, teachers, students, and zoo members. Our zoo docents, who are invaluable to the function of the education department, will also have an office and workspace in the new building.

As construction of the Gertrude C. Ford Education Center nears completion, we are very excited about all that 2009 has in store for our education department. We look forward to all of the educational opportunities that our new facility will provide, and continuing the tradition of quality conservation education at the Jackson Zoo.



GUEST SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The Jackson Zoological Park's Guest Services Department consists of a full time guest service manager, a full time front line supervisor, a full time food service manager, two part time train conductors, and approximately 35 seasonal front line and food service employees.

THE GUEST SERVICE MANAGER directly oversees the zoo's daily operations in regard to all visitor related programs including customer service, admissions, merchandizing, train, food service and other related functions. Supervises the front line supervisor, food service manager and train engineers.

THE FRONT LINE SUPERVISOR is responsible for all aspects of the daily operations of the zoo's admissions and souvenir business, including ticket area, gift shop, and all other souvenir facilities. Supervises part time and seasonal front line employees.

THE FOOD SERVICE MANAGER is responsible for all aspects of the zoo's food business, including the daily management and operations of all food facilities such as school food packages, birthday parties, corporate events and any other group functions. Supervises part time and seasonal food service employees.

THE TRAIN CONDUCTOR is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the train at the zoo.

All employees in the Guest Service Department receive continuous customer service training. These training sessions reinforce the zoo's commitment to provide excellent customer service for all guests, volunteers and staff.

ADMISSIONS: This department greets and provides helpful information to our guests to encourage a great experience at the admission/ticket booths through out the zoo. The admissions department also collects revenue for parking, stroller rental and train revenue.

ATTENDANCE
Guests visiting the zoo = 156,899

Stroller rental revenue \$ 11,972

Train: This department primary function is to provide a safe and enjoyable train experience and to provide a high standard of customer service to guests.

Train riders = 49,617
Train revenue totaling \$ 99,235

Gift Shop and other merchandise outlets: This department primary functions include ordering, pricing and selling novelties throughout the various locations of the zoo. The zoo's merchandizing outlets consist of many popular novelties including several styles of plush, PVC, tees, totes, hats, games and toys, film and disposable cameras, jewelry, books, puzzles, candies, and other collectible items.

Merchandizing revenue totaling
\$ 162,972

Food Service Department: This department primary functions include ordering, pricing and selling food items throughout the various locations of the zoo. Some of the most popular items on the food menu include hamburgers, hotdogs, chicken strips, corn dogs, chili cheese dogs, nachos, popcorn, peanuts, pickles, animal crackers, soft drinks, bottled water and various frozen drinks and treats.

Food Service Revenue totaling
\$ 106,802

Vending
Drinks machines \$ 9,735
Photo booth \$ 1,747
Footsie Wootsie feet massagers
\$ 1,310
Penny Press \$ 1,627

BIRTHDAY PARTIES: Birthday parties are always fun and exciting for our guests and staff. There are several levels of party packages that would encourage anyone an affordable and fulfilling birthday party experience.

Birthday party revenue totaling
\$ 12,483