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**Contact:** Christopher Mims, Director of Marketing and Public Relations 601-352-2599

## **2006 Yields 41,705 More Visitors for the Jackson Zoo than Previous Year**

The Jackson Zoo announced that 192,979 visitors made a stop at the 88-year old Capital City mainstay last year, making 2006 the most attended year in the last several.

One reason for this nearly 30 percent increase over 2005 was the opening of the much anticipated Wilderness Mississippi area in the Spring of 2006 which ushered in thousands of new and returning visitors anxious to see the improvements. As a result, the Jackson Zoo was named a Southern Travel Treasure by “AAA Southern Traveler” in the summer of '06.

“We are pleased with last year’s visitation, and are anticipating continued interest and growth as we continue to build upon our programming and educational opportunities, not to mention other great exhibit improvements we have in store,” said Director Beth Poff.

Visitors attended the Zoo from nearly every county in Mississippi, with 47% from the Jackson metro area, 43% from other Mississippi counties and 10% from other states.

Last year, nearly 40,000 school children from across the state participated in at least one of the Zoo’s education programs as well.

The Jackson Zoo is dedicated to its mission, to provide visitors with a quality recreational and educational environment dedicated to wildlife care and conservation. 2006 also marked the unveiling of a new entryway off Capitol Street and renovation of the orangutan exhibit. This year construction of a state-of-the-art Mississippi Discovery Center will begin. The Zoo also plans to make improvements to the elephant, tiger and leopard exhibits.

The Jackson Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). The AZA is America’s leading accrediting organization that sets rigorous, professional standards for zoos and aquariums. The AZA is building North America's largest wildlife conservation movement by engaging and inspiring the 143 million annual visitors to its member institutions and their communities to care about and take action to help protect wildlife.

The Jackson Zoo is open year round, except Christmas and New Years Day. The Zoo’s hours are 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Sunday.

For more information about Jackson Zoo, please call 601-352-2581 or visit [www.jacksonzoo.org](http://www.jacksonzoo.org).