

News

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SAINT LOUIS ZOO ASSOCIATION COMPLETES ST. LOUIS COUNTY LAND PURCHASE *Proposition Z to Appear on St. Louis County Ballot November 6*

Using privately donated funds, the Saint Louis Zoo Association today completed the purchase of the 425-acre complex in north St. Louis County for \$7.1 million. The property, which was owned by the Plumbers' and Pipefitters' Welfare Educational Fund, is now under the possession of the Zoo Association as part of its long-range plan to help the Zoo's mission to conserve animals.

"With today's announcement, we're one step closer to preserving the world-class Saint Louis Zoo for generations to come while continuing to provide the best possible care for thousands of animals," said Joseph T. Ambrose, President of the Saint Louis Zoo Association. "We're very excited to expand the Zoo's footprint into St. Louis County. This new campus will help the Zoo grow its conservation efforts while also expanding our educational programs for children and offering new and exciting public attractions for local audiences and tourists."

"At the new campus, we plan to have a Conservation & Animal Science Center dedicated to sustaining endangered and threatened species as well as a public component with attractions that connect people with nature and animals," said Jeffrey Bonner, Ph.D., Dana Brown President and Chief Executive Officer of the Saint Louis Zoo. "Research is underway to best determine what the public component will entail, but there is likely to be some kind of a safari experience."

As an engine for economic growth in the region, the Zoo currently supports as many as 2,000 jobs and helps generate over \$215 million annually in economic impact for the local economy. It is still early, but the Zoo estimates that the new campus, when fully operational, could create approximately 100 full-time jobs and about 200 seasonal jobs.

In order to help the Zoo expand economic growth for the region through the operation and development of the new Spanish Lake facility, and support the maintenance of the aging campus in Forest Park, St. Louis County has agreed to submit for approval by County voters a 1/8 of one percent sales tax. "Proposition Z," as the ballot initiative is known, will appear on the St. Louis County ballot on November 6, 2018.

"Funds collected from Prop Z will drive economic growth and create more jobs through a multimillion-dollar investment in new facilities in St. Louis County, while providing unique wildlife experiences that few cities in the world can boast," said Bonner. "The additional funds also will allow us to maintain our century-old campus in Forest Park, which has significant infrastructure needs, including modernization of habitats to meet evolving standards of care."

After months of meetings with elected officials and leaders in St. Louis County and St. Louis City, the Zoo has decided to move forward with Proposition Z in St. Louis County this November; however, it will not pursue a sales tax in St. Louis City at this time.

Zoo Completes Land Purchase add one

“Elected officials and leaders in St. Louis City provided overwhelmingly positive feedback regarding the Zoo. Unfortunately, there was enough concern about exploring a sales tax in St. Louis City given other issues St. Louis City is currently addressing. We heard the City’s concerns and we decided against pursuing a sales tax in St. Louis City at this time,” said Bonner. “We hope to get full regional support in the future, so we are going to keep our options open for St. Louis City and the surrounding areas.”

If Proposition Z is approved by St. Louis County residents this November, the main attraction at the new campus would only be free for them. Everyone else would be charged an admission fee. Admission to the Zoo in Forest Park would continue to remain free for everyone, pursuant to State law.

About the Saint Louis Zoo Association

The Saint Louis Zoo Association cooperates with the Saint Louis Zoo, but is a separately incorporated 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization whose volunteer board is comprised of business and community leaders. The Association’s purpose is to support the Zoo by providing leadership for fundraising, and oversight for the Zoo’s conservation education, programming, facilities, government relations and special events.

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