Northwestern Mutual, Zoological Society and Milwaukee County Zoo unveil Outdoor Gorilla Exhibit

New yard creates enriching habitat and rewarding activities for gorillas

MILWAUKEE, June 30, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- A new exhibit offers an enhanced experience for visitors and gorillas alike at the Milwaukee County Zoo. Northwestern Mutual, through its Foundation, in partnership with the zoo and the Zoological Society of Milwaukee, today unveiled the newly transformed Outdoor Gorilla Exhibit.

The exhibit will serve as a backyard to seven gorillas, including Sulaiman, the male western lowland gorilla born last November and named by Northwestern Mutual employees. New structures in the exhibit include landscaped shelters, vegetation and platforms designed to encourage and enhance the instinctive behaviors of gorillas seen in the wild.

"The Milwaukee County Zoo is a nationally recognized attraction; we are so fortunate to have it in our backyard," said John Kordsmeier, president, Northwestern Mutual Foundation. "Memories of visits to the zoo transcend generations, and this exhibit will provide additional educational and entertainment activities to the 1.3 million visitors who visit each year. We're proud to be part of experiences that will last a lifetime."

Northwestern Mutual announced the gift to the Zoological Society of Milwaukee – the nonprofit organization supporting the Milwaukee County Zoo – in 2014 as part of its portfolio of grants to improve the quality of life and provide education and entertainment opportunities for Milwaukee residents and visitors.

"All winter, the primates staff have been eagerly watching as each new rock, hill or climbing structure was added to the Gorilla Yard," said Trish Khan, Milwaukee County Zoo curator of primates and small mammals. "When the gorillas were finally sent out to explore their new enriched environment, it was wonderful to watch our silverback peacefully survey his family from the highest rock, while the girls try to choose a new favorite spot to rest. It's really hard to tell who is more excited, the gorillas or their zookeepers."

Zoo visitors will have a chance to fully experience and learn about gorillas, an endangered species. The exhibit is free with zoo admission and open during normal operating hours.

"We're grateful for Northwestern Mutual's generous support to the renovated yard," said Dr. Robert (Bert) Davis, president and CEO of the Zoological Society. "We're confident that guests will enjoy the renovations just as much as the gorillas."

About the Milwaukee County Zoo
The Milwaukee County Zoo is home to more than 3,000 mammals, birds, fish, amphibians and reptiles, with more than 420 species represented. Recognized as one of the country's finest zoological attractions, it serves as a resource to the surrounding communities and beyond.

About the Zoological Society of Milwaukee
The mission of the Zoological Society of Milwaukee is to conserve wildlife and endangered species, educate people about the importance of wildlife and the environment, and support the Milwaukee County Zoo.

About Northwestern Mutual Foundation
The mission of the Northwestern Mutual Foundation is to improve the lives of children and families in need. The Foundation has given more than $274 million since its inception in 1992 and is designed to create lasting impact in the communities where the company's employees and financial representatives live and work. We accomplish this by combining financial support, volunteerism, thought leadership and convening community partners to deliver the best outcomes. Our efforts are focused nationally on curing childhood cancer, and locally on education, neighborhoods and making our hometown of Milwaukee a great destination.

About Northwestern Mutual
Northwestern Mutual has been helping families and businesses achieve financial security for nearly 160 years. Our financial representatives build relationships with clients through a distinctive planning approach that integrates risk management with wealth accumulation, preservation and distribution. With more than $230 billion in assets, $27 billion in revenues and more than $1.5 trillion worth of life insurance protection in force, Northwestern Mutual delivers financial security to more than 4.2 million people who rely on us for insurance and investment solutions, including life, disability and long-term care insurance; annuities; trust services; mutual funds; and investment advisory products and services.

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