

Milwaukee County Zoo unveils new entry to Northwestern Mutual Family Farm

Northwestern Mutual Foundation's donation to the Zoological Society of Milwaukee supports renovation

MILWAUKEE, Oct. 5, 2012 [PRNewswire/](#) -- Farming from the past is the theme of a newly renovated main entrance to the Milwaukee County Zoo's Northwestern Mutual Family Farm. At an unveiling Thursday, Oct. 4, representatives from the Zoological Society of Milwaukee, the Zoo and Northwestern Mutual participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

(Photo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20121005/CG87819-a>)

(Photo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20121005/CG87819-b>)

(Logo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20120207/CG48663LOGO>)

A grant from Northwestern Mutual Foundation to the Zoological Society of Milwaukee helped fund major enhancements to the area. Improvements included the creation of a more engaging and educational space that celebrates Wisconsin's early farmers. Green space in the existing area was also expanded.

Full-scale antique farm equipment, garden tools, historical photographs and old-time advertisements for farm implements will give children and adults a first-hand history lesson about Wisconsin's rich agricultural heritage. Children and adults can climb on a 100-year-old, horse-drawn grain wagon for photos.

"We're grateful to Northwestern Mutual for helping us enhance the entrance to the Family Farm," said Dr. Bert Davis, president and chief executive officer of the Zoological Society of Milwaukee. "We also extend our thanks to the Richfield Historical Society for donating the beautiful antique farming equipment. These large, vintage, horse-drawn pieces will give visitors an up-close and educational view of our state's rich farming heritage."

Some of the asphalt at the entrance to the Family Farm has been replaced with grass. This will increase rainwater absorption, reduce urban heat effects and create habitats for small animals and insects, thus leading to a healthier ecosystem. "The Zoo encompasses a 200-year-old forest," said Dr. Bruce Beehler, deputy Zoo director for animal management and health. "We want to maintain the Zoo's green appearance; so we're always looking for ways to add more green space to the park."

Jennifer Diliberti, public relations coordinator for the Zoo, said that the new farm entrance expanded on the Zoo's efforts to create an eco-friendly environment, including water-permeable "bricks" and rain gardens. "The gift shops sell rain barrels for recycling water and the Zoo collects rain water to use for cleaning park grounds. We've also changed from gasoline-powered Zoomobiles to electric-powered ones and have added solar panels to power areas of the Zoo," added Diliberti.

"Milwaukee-area families and other Zoo visitors will be able to enjoy this first-class exhibit for years to come," said John Kordsmeier, president, Northwestern Mutual Foundation. "We're dedicated to bettering the communities where our employees live, work and play and this new entryway will further strengthen the Zoo's reputation as an exceptional attraction."

The Milwaukee County Zoo, which hosted nearly 1.3 million attendees in 2011, receives funding through a cooperative effort of Milwaukee County and the Zoological Society of Milwaukee County.

About Zoological Society of Milwaukee

Established in 1910, the Zoological Society of Milwaukee (ZSM) is a private non-profit organization whose mission is to conserve wildlife and endangered species, educate people about the importance of wildlife and the environment, and support the Milwaukee County Zoo. The ZSM has 54,400 member households and gave more than \$6.4 million in support to the Zoo in 2010-'11. For information, visit www.zoosociety.org.

About the Milwaukee County Zoo

Since 1892 the objective of the Milwaukee County Zoo has been to promote an appreciation for all animals and to support conservation of their diverse habitats. The Zoo is a leader in animal management, conservation, research and education. The Zoo aims to inspire public understanding and support of global conservation of animal species and their environments by creating a bond between Zoo visitors and the living Earth.

About the Northwestern Mutual Foundation

The mission of the Northwestern Mutual Foundation – the largest corporate foundation in the state of Wisconsin – is to build strong, vibrant communities that serve as a legacy to future generations. The Foundation's giving is designed to create an impact on the communities where the company's employees and financial representatives live and work. In fiscal year 2012, the

Foundation will contribute \$16.7 million to nonprofit organizations across the country. To learn more, please visit www.nmfoundation.com.

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