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# News Release

“We work together to build a community of the highest quality for present and future generations.”

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Bill Gersonde, Executive Director, Abilene Zoo  
Ph: 325-676-6590 Email: [bill.gersonde@abilenetx.gov](mailto:bill.gersonde@abilenetx.gov)

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## **Another Giraffe Calf Joins the Abilene Zoo Herd**

ABILENE, Texas - The City of Abilene and the Abilene Zoo are proud to announce the arrival of another giraffe calf born on Monday, January 8 at approximately 7:00 A.M. This was a first time birth for mother Sunny who arrived in Abilene in 2016 prior to the opening of Giraffe Safari. “We’ve had four calves born in the last year, all sired by our bull Mesi, but this is the first female,” said Bill Gersonde, Zoo Executive Director. This birth brings the Zoo herd size up to ten.

The female calf received her first physical on January 8 weighing in at 157 pounds and standing at 6’ 7”. “When the calf was born she failed to have a good suckling response and didn’t nurse within the first 24 hours,” said Zoo Veterinarian Dr. Stephanie Carle. “For hoofstock like giraffes, it is critical that they receive colostrum (mother’s first milk) within the first 24 hours to help build needed antibodies. Unfortunately this did not happen for our calf.”

Zoo staff quickly took action and contacted North American giraffe care specialists. The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium had banked blood plasma containing the necessary important antibodies from one of their giraffes and graciously offered to ship same day so staff could administer the plasma Tuesday night. Thankfully, **the calf began nursing from her mother Wednesday afternoon.** “We are currently monitoring this calf very closely to ensure her immune system responds appropriately and that she continues to nurse and thrive,” said Dr. Carle.

According to Denise Ibarra, Zoo General Curator, “The mom and calf will be kept off exhibit allowing them to bond and for the calf to grow stronger. We’ll begin introductions to the other giraffe and put mom and daughter on exhibit in a couple of weeks. Hopefully, zoo guests will be able to see mom and baby within the next three weeks.”

The Abilene Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums through this accreditation they are able to network with other zoos that face similar issues or have the ability to assist. The Abilene Zoo reached out to the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo and the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium who have created a partnership to keep a blood bank that provides plasma to AZA accredited facilities that have a neonate in need.

Since its founding in 1966, the Abilene Zoo has stood as a place of learning and adventure. Situated on 16 acres in the award-winning Grover Nelson Park, the zoo has more than 1000 animals of 270 species from around the globe. The zoo is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Last admittance is 4 p.m. Tickets are \$8 for adults, \$5.50 for children ages 3-12, \$7 for seniors aged 60 and older. Members are admitted free. [www.abilenezoo.org](http://www.abilenezoo.org). [325-676-6085](tel:325-676-6085).

**Mission Statement:** The Abilene Zoo is a place of learning and adventure, where families make memories, share the joy of discovery and become inspired to preserve wildlife.

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