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# News Release

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Date:** June 17, 2010

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## GREENVILLE ZOO'S ELEPHANTS TURN 40

*Zoo kicks off Summer Zoobilee with week-long birthday festivities*

**Greenville, S.C.** –The Greenville Zoo will mark the beginning of its Summer Zoobilee with Elephant Week and a special 40<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration for Joy and Lady Bird, the zoo’s female African elephants and two of its most popular residents, Monday, June 21 through Sunday, June 27. The Summer Zoobilee, sponsored by the zoo and Friends of the Zoo, is part of the zoo’s year-long 50<sup>th</sup> celebration and will feature special festivities throughout the summer for zoo guests.

Elephant Week, free with zoo admission, will feature special zookeeper talks daily at 11 a.m., painting demonstrations with the elephants at 2 p.m. and a giant birthday card for guests to sign. On Thursday, June 24, the zoo will host a special birthday celebration beginning at 11 a.m. which will include a birthday cake for the elephants, music, treats and party hats for children.

“We are truly thrilled to celebrate such a milestone birthday with the Greenville community,” said Greenville Zoo Director Jeff Bullock. “These special events provide the perfect opportunity for our visitors to enjoy the zoo’s residents and learn more about each of the individual species.”

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As one of the Greenville Zoo's long-time residents, Joy arrived at the zoo in 1977 at the age of seven. She remained the zoo's only elephant until Lady Bird's arrived in 2006. Lady Bird was originally from a safari park in Florida where she was part of a herd of three female African elephants. In order to accommodate Lady Bird's arrival, the zoo expanded the elephant exhibit.

According to Bullock, Joy and Lady Bird, now 40 years old, have surpassed the average life expectancy for African elephants and are reaching the latter years of their lives. "The staff works diligently with our elephants daily through training routines, baths and exercises to help them maintain their physical well-being. This past year, the zoo has taken a more aggressive role in operant conditioning training which has enabled an improved level of health care and enrichment to both Joy and Lady Bird."

As part of the Greenville Zoo's celebration of 50 years, zoo guests can enjoy birthday festivities throughout the Summer Zoobilee scheduled for June 21 – August 14. Each week of the Zoobilee will focus on a specific Greenville Zoo animal or exhibit, providing visitors with the opportunity to learn more about the zoo's history and its residents through special events, birthday celebrations and zookeeper talks. All funds raised at the Summer Zoobilee will go toward funding the zoo's animal medical clinic. A complete Summer Zoobilee schedule is listed on the last page.

### **About the Greenville Zoo**

Groundbreaking of the Greenville Zoo began nearly 50 years ago in Cleveland Park and opened to the public with mostly indigenous animals including bears, deer, bobcat, foxes, ducks and prairie dogs. Today, the Greenville Zoo is rated one of the best tourist attractions in South Carolina, attracting over 270,000 people annually to its 14-acre facility filled with wildlife from around the world including giraffe, monkeys, giant tortoises and elephants.

The Greenville Zoo is open seven days a week, except on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. The zoo's hours of operation are from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and the gates close at 5 p.m. For more information about the Brew in the Zoo and the Greenville Zoo, visit [www.greenvillezoo.com](http://www.greenvillezoo.com) or become a fan on Facebook.

## **Greenville Zoo's Summer Zoobilee Calendar of Events**

**June 21 - 27- A stampede of fun! Joy & Ladybird, the zoo's elephants, turn 40!**

**June 28 - July 4 - Reptile Week**

**July 5 - 11 - Orangutans Week**

**July 9 - Brew in the Zoo presented by RJ Rockers**

**Tap into the wild with a 21st birthday bash for Mia, the zoo's orangutan!**

**July 12 - 18 - South America Week**

**July 17 - Hot Dog Day**

**July 19 - 25 - A roaring fun farewell to the lions!**

**July 26 - Aug 1 - Swing in for the siamangs birthday festivities!**

**August 2 - 8 - Primates Week**

**August 9 - 14 - It's a giraffe birthday! Party in our "neck" of the woods!**

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