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# News Release

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Date:** February 9, 2010

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## RED PANDA MAKES DEBUT AT GREENVILLE ZOO

*Rare panda meets his new mate just in time for Valentine's Day*

**Greenville, S.C.** – Guests visiting the Greenville Zoo this weekend will have the opportunity to meet its newest resident. The Greenville Zoo's new red panda named Firecracker, a 3-year-old male, joins the Zoo as a companion to a 5-year-old female named Scarlett. Zoo officials are hoping the pairing will result in a successful match.

Currently, there are fewer than 2,500 red pandas in the world and only 51 red pandas in North American Zoos. In an effort to help the endangered species, the pair of red pandas are on a breeding loan by the Species Survival Plan (SSP), which helps manage captive populations in North America. The SSP makes breeding recommendations and develops long-term research and management strategies for the species.

According to Zoo Director Jeff Bullock, the Greenville Zoo has a long history of successful red panda breeding, including a rare set of triplets born in 2006. "Firecracker makes a great addition to the Zoo, providing visitors with the opportunity to enjoy and learn more about the species." Bullock said. "We look forward to doing our part by helping to ensure we have a strong captive population since these pandas are endangered in the wild."

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Best known for their striking red coats and white to reddish-brown facial mask, red pandas are about 42 inches long. Adult red pandas weigh between 12 and 20 pounds and have a long, bushy tail that accounts for two-thirds of their body length. Their soft, dense fur covers their entire body—even the soles of their feet. They are superb climbers, and when not searching for food on the ground, spend most of their time in the trees. Greenville Zoo's red panda exhibit can be found in the Asia area.

### About Greenville Zoo

Rated one of the best tourist attractions in South Carolina, the Greenville Zoo is an exotic animal kingdom located in downtown Greenville. Operated by the City of Greenville, the 14-acre facility features wildlife from around the world including giraffes, monkeys, giant tortoises and elephants. Visitors can also enjoy one of the Zoo's most popular exhibits, the Reptile Building, which is home to a variety of lizards, frogs, turtles and snakes. Additional attractions include Cleveland Park which features a children's playground, picnic tables, walking paths and plenty of wide open green spaces. For more information about the Greenville Zoo, visit [www.greenvillezoo.com](http://www.greenvillezoo.com).

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