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## **ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS GRANTS FRESNO CHAFFEE ZOO ACCREDITATION**

FRESNO, Calif. – The Fresno Chaffee has been granted accreditation by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Zoo Corporation Chair John Valentino and Zoo CEO/Director Lewis Greene were present at today's accreditation hearing held during the AZA's spring meeting in Denver, CO. AZA accreditation was granted after the Zoo underwent a rigorous inspection of its operations and programs including animal care, education, conservation and safety.

In March 2006 the AZA tabled the accreditation of the Fresno Chaffee Zoo for one year to allow time for the new governing authority to become fully operational. In 2006 the Zoo transitioned from a City managed zoo to a non-profit attraction led by Fresno's Chaffee Zoo Corporation.

"I am pleased the AZA recognizes the progress made by Fresno Chaffee Zoo. AZA's endorsement provides resources, credibility and professional support that will assist the Zoo as we continue to provide a fun, unique and up-close experience that strengthens the bond between people and wildlife" stated CEO/Director Lewis Greene.

AZA is the national leader in establishing and maintaining standards for zoos and aquariums through the accreditation process. Fewer than 10% of the approximately 2,400 animal exhibits licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture have achieved AZA accreditation.

In order to retain membership and remain accredited, zoos and aquariums undergo the complete accreditation process every five years. The Fresno Chaffee Zoo's next accreditation inspection should occur in 2011 since the Zoo remained an accredited facility during the one year tabling period.