

# HATTIESBURG ZOO

## For Immediate Release

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## **BIRTHDAY BASH SET FOR APRIL 29 AT HATTIESBURG ZOO**

**HATTIESBURG (April 11, 2017)** — This year's annual event Birthday Bash: Hattiesburg Zoo Unzipped has been set for Saturday, April 29 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. This celebration gives guests a behind-the-scenes look at the Zoo as it celebrates its 67<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Activities included in admission are birthday celebrations, cake, lawn games, unlimited train and carousel rides, keeper secrets and talks, animal encounters, science experiments, animal enrichment, and splash pad.

Additionally, zookeepers will conduct free tours throughout the day of four areas of the Zoo that are typically restricted from guest access. These areas include the animal kitchen, quarantine and animal hospital, Asbury Discovery Center, and African Barn. Each tour will last approximately fifteen minutes. Tours are given in small groups, so guests are encouraged to plan their day accordingly.

Tours of the tigers' exhibit holding area are available for \$5 per person and will be limited to a first-come, first-serve basis. Tickets can be purchased the day of the event at the gate.

"We are excited to give our guests an opportunity to see how the Zoo operates on a daily basis from behind-the-scenes. These tours will give Zoo visitors the chance to talk to our keepers and see where our animals go when not on exhibit. It's also an incredible time to showcase all of the Zoo's growth and enhancements," Stephen Taylor, animal care manager for Hattiesburg Zoo, said.

During Birthday Bash, Zoo team members will also highlight three exhibits complete with extra bio facts. In addition, an "Exploding Pies" science experiment will be conducted at Flamingo

Pavilion at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

In an effort to educate Zoo guests further, conservation agencies from the surrounding areas will be present. These include Sandhill Crane Refuge and the Crosby Arboretum.

Another educational component of Birthday Bash is the customized scavenger hunts available for \$5, which asks questions about the Zoo's animals and encourages guest participation. Those who complete a scavenger hunt will receive a special prize.

“Education and conservation are important to us as a Zoo, and we enjoy sharing this with the community. We hope the bio fact stations, keeper chats, and science experiments will inspire our guests to learn about our animals in a fun and engaging way,” Jeremy Cumpton, education manager for Hattiesburg Zoo, said.

In addition to the Zoo's Safari Grill established food and drink selections, there will be some special concessions available for purchase, including snow cones and other frozen treats.

Admission is \$10, and children under 2 are free. Annual passes are not applicable. General admission tickets can be purchased the day of the event at the gate or in advance at <http://squ.re/2owcy63>. Advance ticket sales will end on April 28 at 5 p.m. Tiger tour, and scavenger hunts can be purchased the day of the event.

*For additional information, call the Hattiesburg Zoo at 601.545.4576 or visit the Zoo online at [HattiesburgZoo.com](http://HattiesburgZoo.com) or on Facebook. The Hattiesburg Zoo is a Hattiesburg Convention Commission Facility, in partnership with the City of Hattiesburg and the Hattiesburg Tourism Commission. Since 1991, the Hattiesburg Convention Commission has been developing and operating tourism-related facilities for the Hattiesburg area.*

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