



News From

Maggie Brooks

Monroe County Executive

For Immediate Release

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BROOKS, ZOO OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE RE-OPENING OF PENGUIN EXHIBIT

*Zoo boasts one of the top African black-footed penguin breeding programs
in North America*

County Executive Maggie Brooks today was joined by officials from the Seneca Park Zoo to announce the re-opening of the African black-footed penguin exhibit located in the Rocky Coasts area of the Zoo. In early 2010, a significant leak was detected in the 14-year old penguin pool. While repairing the leak posed significant challenges, it also provided the Zoo with a unique opportunity to make improvements to the exhibit based on advances in construction, design and observations of penguin behavior.

*“Re-opening this popular exhibit was a top priority for the Seneca Park Zoo,” said **Brooks**. “These improvements will not only benefit our penguins, but will allow for a more enjoyable, unique experience for the visitors of the Zoo as well.”*

The renovations to the exhibit were part of a capital improvement project to modernize and replace the aquatic systems associated with the Rocky Coasts area. Those systems included the three separate pools for the polar bears, sea lions and penguins. Modernizations included; rock work, pool reconstruction, new pumps with variable speed drives and filtration and water purification components. The overall improvements will generate a cost savings of approximately \$120,000 annually to the Zoo’s electricity, water and sewer expenses.

“Once the penguins have acclimated to their newly-renovated home, visitors should be able to see them swimming consistently for the first time,” said County Zoo Director Larry Sorel. “The Zoo has a successful history of breeding these magnificent animals and the upgrades to the exhibit were necessary to maintain that success.”

The new penguin exhibit incorporates jets, different depth levels and more surface area in the pool. There are also additional enhancements that will provide shelter for the penguins from extreme weather as well as an island for keepers to stand on while feeding the penguins that are in the water.

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Seneca Park Zoo is home to one of the top three African black-footed penguin breeding programs in North America. Since the breeding program began in the 1990s; 79 penguin chicks have hatched, 9 of which have hatched since last September when construction began on the exhibit. Today, thirty-three penguins are on exhibit at the Zoo; 13 males, 13 females and 7 juveniles.

African black-footed penguins are listed as endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List (IUCN). The three greatest threats facing this species are oil spills, leaking tankers and over-fishing of their environment. Currently, there are only 52,000 of these penguins left in the wild.

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