



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Winfield Danielson
Marketing and Public Relations Manager
Office: (757) 441-2374 ext 223
Cell: (757) 777-7899
Email: winfield.danielson@norfolk.gov

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NEWBORN GIRAFFE OVER SIX-FEET TALL

MEDIA OPP: Filming opportunities and interviews are available now.

Norfolk, Va. – The Virginia Zoo is pleased to announce the birth of a baby giraffe.

After a two-hour labor and a six-foot headfirst drop, giraffe parents 10-year old Billy and 9 year-old Imara welcomed their new baby Thursday, July 28 at 4:20 p.m. The gestation period for giraffe is 15 months, so this birth has been long anticipated by Zoo staff. Many Zoo visitors were lucky enough to watch the entire labor and birth.

“The idea of a six-foot drop sounds scary to people, but it’s normal for a giraffe,” explains executive director Greg Bockheim. “It helps stimulate breathing to get the baby on its own – and since baby giraffe can be 6-feet tall and 150 pounds, the fall doesn’t seem so far to them.” Zoo staff and board members are ecstatic about this new baby, he added. Mom and baby can be viewed by Zoo visitors now.

“This healthy birth marks an exciting milestone for our giraffe collection,” says Bockheim, who adds that this is the second birth for Imara. Her last offspring, Willow, now lives at Disney’s Animal Kingdom in Florida.

Newborn giraffe can stand and walk within 1 hour of birth, and they can start eating leaves at 4 months old. At the Zoo, the baby won’t need protection from predators, but Mom – and zookeepers – will keep a vigilant watch over the newborn. The new baby has been given a preliminary check up by the Zoo’s vet and appears to be very healthy.

The Zoo will announce a baby naming poll at a later date.

BABY GIRAFFE



Baby giraffe born at the Virginia Zoo July 28, 2011 (Virginia Zoo photo by Craig Pelke).



Baby giraffe weighed for the first time at the Virginia Zoo July 28, 2011 (Virginia Zoo photo by Craig Pelke).

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As an accredited Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) facility, the Virginia Zoo exhibits over 350 animals, beautifully manicured grounds and offers a fun-filled day for all. For more than a century, the Virginia Zoo has demonstrated a commitment to wildlife, conservation and education. Open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and located at 3500 Granby Street in Norfolk. Daily admission prices are \$11.00 for adults, \$10.00 for seniors (age 62 and over), and \$9.00 for children ages 2-11. Visit www.virginiazoo.org or call (757) 441-2374 for more information.