



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Saturday June 4, 2011

Toledo, Ohio—The Toledo Zoo is proud to announce that 32-year-old Renee, one of their two female African elephants, gave birth to her second calf, a male, estimated weight approximately 200 – 225 lbs, at 11:28 pm on Friday, June 3. The yet unnamed calf was born without assistance and appears to be healthy. “After 22 long months of anxious anticipation, it’s extremely gratifying to have a healthy calf,” said Dr. Anne Baker, the Zoo’s Executive Director. The calf stood within minutes of birth and Renee is showing excellent maternal behavior.

The calf has attempted to suckle and successful nursing should occur within 24 hours. Should nursing not take place, the Zoo will supplement the calf with colostrum, the mother’s first milk that is rich in antibodies, or with a frozen reserve of elephant plasma, which also contains the antibodies.

The calf was conceived in August of 2009 through an artificial insemination procedure performed by Elephant Reproductive Specialist Dr. Dennis Schmitt and the Toledo Zoo animal care team. There were two sperm donors and paternity will be determined at a later date. “With the major hurdle of the birth behind us, there are still many critical milestones ahead for Renee and her calf, including bonding, successful nursing, introduction to the other Toledo Zoo elephants, the one-year mark, and weaning,” said Dr. Chris Hanley, Toledo Zoo Chief Veterinarian .

Though the Toledo Zoo is delighted with the successful birth, they remain cautiously optimistic about the future of Renee’s calf. Mother and calf are being monitored round the clock to ensure that the calf begins nursing and that Renee continues to exhibit good maternal behavior.

Renee and the newborn calf are currently off exhibit and will remain so until the animal care staff determines that all necessary criteria for public viewing have been met. The criteria include a healthy, strong calf, maternal acceptance, bonding, and Renee appearing to be comfortable as a new mom and with the presence of people. **When viewing begins, hours may be irregular and limited. Renee’s first offspring, eight-year-old Louie, and Twiggy, a 26-year-old female that arrived at the Zoo in February 2010 will be available for viewing during regular Zoo hours.**

The successful birth of Renee’s calf is vital to the zoo elephant population for several reasons. The population of females is aging rapidly with a large percentage exceeding the prime breeding age for the species. Captive breeding efforts are also hampered by a lack of breeding-age bulls and bulls that are of age but show no inclination toward breeding. However, through vigorous breeding efforts, it is hoped that the African elephant zoo population will have a strong future.

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