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Note: Toledo Zoo's director of animal programs, Terry Webb, will be available for interviews tomorrow, Thursday, June 8 from 10 – 11 a.m. Please RSVP to the Communication team.

Louie, the African Elephant to be Transferred

TOLEDO, Ohio — On down the road he goes...Soon, Louie, the African elephant, will be a travelin' man.

Louie will be transferred to Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium on a recommendation of the African Elephant Species Survival Plan (SSP) through the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. Louie will have the potential to breed with the Zoo's five female resident elephants to help sustain the genetic diversity of this endangered species' population in zoos. As this move is animal and weather dependent, no timetable has been established, but it will likely occur in the fall.

In his new home at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium, Louie will join a herd of six other African elephants (five female and one juvenile male) in their multi-species African Grasslands exhibit, which includes zebras, impalas and a 150,000 gallon pool. The Zoo also boasts the largest indoor elephant herd space in North America at 29,000 square feet. Combined, the indoor and outdoor elephant areas total more than five acres.

"Since his birth, Louie has been a visitor favorite. Our guests have enjoyed learning all about the largest land mammal and threats facing the incredible species while watching him grow. This SSP recommended move is the logical next step for his growth and development and we hope that visitors will join us in being excited to see what the future holds for Louie," said Shayla Bell Moriarty, Toledo Zoo's director of communication. Louie's mother, Renee, half-brother, Lucas, and companion, Twiggy, will remain on exhibit at the Toledo Zoo.

African elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) are listed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species as vulnerable due to poaching for ivory and loss of habitat from human expansion. It is estimated there are 415,000 African elephants roaming in 37 different African nations.

Louie was born on April 30, 2003 at the Toledo Zoo to mother, Renee. At birth he weighed in at 275 pounds. This year Louie turned 14 and currently weighs approximately 6,000 pounds and stands nearly nine feet tall.

Louie will continue to be on exhibit in the Toledo Zoo's Tembo Trail until the time of transfer and the Zoo hopes visitors will join in wishing him well before he moves on down the road to a new herd and home.

The Toledo Zoo is committed to inspiring others to join us in caring for animals and conserving the natural world. As part of that mission, the Toledo Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), a leader in global wildlife conservation. AZA member institutions are dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for visitors and a better future for all living things. Submitted by: Kim Haddix

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