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316-660-9370 WWW.SEDGWICKCOUNTY.ORG

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CONTACT
Kate Flavin
316-660-9370

Sedgwick County supports Zoo Master Plan upgrades

(Sedgwick County, Kan.) – Commissioners approved \$6 million in funding over the next three years to replace the County-owned entryway and administrative building at the Sedgwick County Zoo. According to the Sedgwick County Zoological Society, the County funding will be combined with \$9 million in privately raised funds to implement Phase 1 of the Zoo's new 25-year Master Plan.

Unveiled at a news conference in October, the first phase of the new Master Plan includes a new entryway complex, administrative offices, gift shop, an expanded and enhanced Amur Leopard habitat, and an electric train for visitors for an estimated total \$15 million.

"The Sedgwick County Zoo is a prime example of what we can achieve as a community when we work together," Chairman David Dennis said. "We are today's stewards of this strong partnership that over five decades has created an invaluable community asset that drives economic impact and continues to move our region forward."

The proposal brought forward by the Zoological Society included a \$2 million anonymous challenge grant and a \$7 million fundraising campaign for a total of \$9 million. Sedgwick County's \$6 million will fund 40 percent of the total cost for Phase 1.

Planning calls for the grand opening of Phase 1 to be in time to commemorate the Zoo's 50th Anniversary in 2021.

The current Operating Agreement between Sedgwick County and the Sedgwick County Zoological Society provide County funds for county personnel working at the Zoo, and 50 percent of the Zoo's annual Capital Improvement Project (CIP) expenditures with provisions for the Society to request additional County funding. Typical funding partnerships between the County and the Society have relied on the Society for revenue generating projects, and animal habitats and exhibits. County funding has typically

been for capital investments in new buildings, and infrastructure maintenance and repair.

During the meeting, Kevin Arnel said, “Sedgwick County’s participation in the entrance complex will ensure a positive welcoming experience for the millions of visitors that will enjoy our Zoo in the future and recognize Sedgwick County’s critical role in the partnership. The Zoological Society appreciates the County Commission’s leadership on behalf of the Zoo and on behalf of the community.”

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About Sedgwick County

Established in 1867 and located in south-central Kansas, Sedgwick County is home to more than 500,000 residents and occupies 1,008 square miles of land. The county holds 21 municipalities including the county seat, Wichita, the largest city in Kansas and known as the Air Capital of the World as a global leader in aviation manufacturing services. Sedgwick County’s 2019 Adopted Budget of \$439,530,621 focuses on its key priorities (Safe and Secure Communities, Public Services and Cultural Experiences, Effective Government Organization, and Communications and Engagement). Sedgwick County, which will celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2020, bears the name of a Civil War hero, Major General John Sedgwick of the Union Army.