



Norton City Council

Please Read During Meeting: Monday, August 24, 2020

Akron Zoo Update



Economic Impact

The Akron Zoo is one of the most visited attractions in Summit County with over 400,000 visitors in 2019. The Zoo is a special place where kids love to learn and families come to spend quality time together! It is also an economic and community asset, supporting over **850 jobs** and generating nearly **\$8 in economic impact in Summit County for every \$1 of public support received**, adding over a half a billion dollars to the Summit County economy since 2011.

The Akron Zoo's Mission is to connect your life to wildlife while inspiring lifelong learning and conservation action.

Education

The Akron Zoo's mission comes alive through STEM education programs, which brings the community nose-to-nose with **over 1,000 animals** from around the world, while saving wildlife and wild places through conservation projects and programs. The Akron Zoo strives to provide value to the citizens of Summit County through enhanced **quality of life** by connecting them to wildlife and nature.

Each year the Zoo continues to grow and serve more people throughout the community.

In 2019 your Akron Zoo:

- Connected **91,230 individuals** to wildlife through education programs and field trips.
- Reached **81 school districts**, presenting 889 science-based education programs.
- Supported **21 conservation projects** or programs to save endangered species and habitats from extinction, including **four citizen-science programs** managed by the Zoo. These programs engage the community in conservation action.
- Participate in **46 Species Survival Plans** to save endangered species through responsible breeding and management programs.
- **One of only 238 zoos** and aquariums that meet the highest standards of accreditation by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.
- Opened a new area of the Zoo, *the Landon & Cynthia Knight Pride of Africa*. This project opened in June 2019 and provides beautiful habitats for African lions, Speke's gazelles, white storks, guineafowl and African goats. It is a great example of how the levy funding and philanthropic community join

together to help the Zoo provide **quality experiences** for Summit County by creating immersive and engaging spaces for people to connect to wildlife.

- Welcomed **402,143 guests** to the Zoo in 2019. Since receiving public funding in 2001 our attendance has grown from 114,139 to 402,143, with 40% of our guests coming from Summit County and 60% from surrounding counties and states.
- Started construction on the *Lehner Family Foundation Wild Asia*. This new project will be completed **summer 2021** and provide new spacious habitats for Sumatran tigers, red pandas and white-cheeked gibbons. *Wild Asia* is designed to bring guests up-close to these endangered species and provide a fun, educational experience.

Giving Back

Summit County Community Appreciation Days

Since 2000, the Akron Zoo has hosted **Summit County Community Appreciation Days** for all communities in the county. Because of COVID, things are a little different this year. Residents will still be able to get tickets but they must get their tickets online for a specific time slot as the Zoo is only permitted to allow a limited number of guests in the park at one time.

City of Norton Community Days

Dates: Complimentary Tickets Available Online – September 11 – September 25

Visit Dates – September 26 – October 9

Your community will have 14 days to choose from during the two-week visit period. September 11 – September 25. Norton residents will be able to get free tickets online by going to the zoo's website: www.akronzoo.org There is a page on the Zoo's website with step by step instructions on how to secure free tickets.

Supporting the Zoo

This November, the Zoo will be on the ballot asking Summit County voters to support a 0.8 mil renewal with a 0.4 mil increase for 10 years to support our programs, operations and growth. The levy will cost the owner of \$100,000 home \$2.92 per month. This is the first time since the original levy passed in 2000 that the Zoo is requesting an increase in funding.

November 2020 Levy:

The successful levy this fall will...

- Provide more science-based **STEM education** and outreach programs for students throughout Summit County.
- Keep your Zoo **affordable for all families** while expanding educational opportunities.
- Continue to support **exceptional care and welfare** for more than 1,000 animals, including endangered species.
- Add **more animals and habitats**, including giraffes.

If residents would like a yard sign, they can request one at www.voteakronzoo.org