

Weekly Zoo Article

By Kathy Sexson, Director

October 17, 2008

It will be a spooktacularly special evening tomorrow night when the Friends of Lee Richardson Zoo host their 15th annual BOO! At The Zoo. Last year over 5000 people flocked to the zoo to take in a gorgeous evening, spooky decorations, great costumes, lots of “trick and treat” stops, and overall, a ghoulishly fun time. BOO! At The Zoo has become a tradition at the zoo, and is one of the two major events that the Friends hold annually to raise funds for improvements at the zoo. This year’s proceeds will benefit Cat Canyon, a new exhibit being planned for our jaguars, pumas and bobcats. Last year BOO! proceeds raised nearly \$18,000 for this exciting new exhibit, and we know this year will bring us even closer to our goal.

BOO! At The Zoo has become a great community event as well, with many businesses, service organizations, and volunteers pitching in to set up treat stops and decorate the zoo. BOO!-goers will follow a decorated trail through the zoo Saturday evening, enjoying the fall leaves, brisk evening air, and some Halloween spirit. For a change, it will be the zoo animals doing the observing, and wondering why the visitors look so strange! This year we have 25 treat stops lined up to hand out goodies and entertain your little ghosts and goblins. Treat stops and other community sponsors have stepped up to make this event a success, volunteering their time, energy, creativity and funds, and we greatly appreciate their enthusiasm and support. Many treat stops return every year, but we also have some new ones lined up this year.

The zoo will be closed from 3:00 PM Friday afternoon to allow set up to begin, and will remain closed all day Saturday until the gates creak open at 5:00 PM. BOO! runs through 8:30 PM, and the weather forecast looks to be NOT frightful at all! Admission to the event is \$3.00 per person. You can pay at the gate, or purchase advance tickets from the Safari Shoppe, Office Solutions, or Ward’s Garden Center. Tickets will be sold at advance purchase locations through Saturday, up to the start of the event. Costumes are optional, but highly desirable as they make the night that much more entertaining. For those who don’t bring their own bag to collect treats, we will provide one at the gate.

For the uninitiated who may be attending BOO! for the first time, this is a fun, safe, and unique zoo event for kids of ALL ages, from toddler to adult! Of course, the atmosphere is a little tamer for the younger set while it is still light out, so we recommend an early visit for families with small children. For the tweens, teens, and grown-ups with a little bit of kid still hiding inside them, you’ll appreciate the spookier, scarier, and less predictable encounters that are unearthed after dark.

This is an event we couldn’t do without our volunteers and sponsors, and sponsorship of any kind, from financial contributions to in-kind services and talents, etc., are always greatly appreciated.

Volunteers for post-event clean up are also still needed, as we put all the decorations and electrical supplies away after the event Saturday evening so the zoo can reopen at 8 AM Sunday morning. Persons interested in helping with this task can contact Christine at the FOLRZ office for details.

BOO! is a frightfully fun time that only happens once a year, so you won't want to miss it. No matter how old you are, dust off your witch hat, grab your ghost sheet, or slip on your scariest mask and head on down to Lee Richardson Zoo for a bewitchingly good time. A great time for a great cause! What more could you ask for? See you Saturday night!

Visit the zoo's award winning website at www.garden-city.org