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## 90 Years Old and Still Going Strong

In 1927, members of the community in the Izaak Walton League, an early conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of wildlife, started the Garden City Zoo, in conjunction with the city. The original plan was for each committee member to locate and procure Kansas native species to fill the new zoo. The earliest residents of the zoo were two skunks donated by Lee Richardson, then Chief of Police and Park and Zoo Superintendent. Quickly, the zoo population grew to include exotic species when two members of the Izaak Walton League purchased an African lioness from a passing circus to add to the residents at the zoo.

Since the founding of Lee Richardson Zoo, our community has continued to play an integral role in the growth of the zoo. Thanks to generous support Lee Richardson Zoo has gone from habitats of 8 foot woven fence in 1927 to modern habitats like Cat Canyon, and in the near future, the new home for the primates. Lee Richardson Zoo's evolution over the last 90 years would have been impossible without the generous support of Garden City and its community.

Join us in celebrating 90 years of Lee Richardson Zoo the week of May 14th- 20th. This weeklong celebration will be fun for everyone. The first event is May 14<sup>th</sup>, Mother's Day, where there will be Keeper Chats, ribbons on informational signs to identify zoo mothers, and special discounts for Moms at both the Safari Shoppe and Giraffe Encounters. Friends of Lee Richardson Zoo will be hosting Blues at the Zoo on Tuesday the 16<sup>th</sup>. This is a ticketed, evening event at the zoo for families to enjoy live music by the Nighthawks. Join us on Friday, the 19<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon, for Endangered Species Day when we will have Discovery Carts, Keeper Chats, and fun activities to highlight endangered species and how we can all do our part to help conserve them. Last, but not least, is our big birthday bash on Saturday, the 20<sup>th</sup>.

The birthday celebration will be a fun filled day with Keeper Chats, Discovery Carts, Community Exhibitors, and more. There will also be a Photo Contest for "My favorite thing about Lee Richardson Zoo!" The photos can be viewed starting Monday, May 15<sup>th</sup> at the Finnup Center for Conservation Education, and at

the birthday celebration, you will have the chance to cast your vote for your favorite photo. Photos are not the only contest happening at the birthday. Bakers of all ages and skill levels can submit an entry for the Cake Decorating Contest with their cake decorated for a “Zoo Birthday”. View the cakes at the Finnup Center for Conservation Education on the 20th, and vote for your favorites. Finally, we encourage adults and kids to wear your best family-friendly animal outfit and join us for the Wildside Walk. This short walk across the zoo will conclude with a group sing-along of “Happy Birthday to You” and a birthday treat. Birthday treats will be available on the Finnup Center for Conservation Education patio as long as they last.

We have a lot to celebrate with Lee Richardson Zoo turning 90 years old and we’re so excited to share this celebration with you.