



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Tasmanian Devils Arrive at Zoo**

**Media photos provided. Access to quarantine space is not permitted. Staff will be available for interviews between 3PM – 5PM on Monday, September 26 only.**

Two male Tasmanian devils, named Milton and Mischief, arrived at the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo on September 23, 2016. The Tasmanian devils will not be on exhibit in the 2016 season due to the zoo's quarantine requirements. Guests can expect to meet Milton and Mischief when the zoo opens for the 2017 season.

The Fort Wayne Children's Zoo is one of only six zoos selected in the US to receive Tasmanian Devils through the *Save the Tasmanian Devil Program*. This conservation program to save these unique animals from extinction is administered by the Australian Government. The Fort Wayne Children's Zoo will be the last zoo in the US to receive Tasmanian Devils.

A parasitic transmissible cancer known as Devil Facial Tumor Disease has wiped out nearly 70% of the wild Tasmanian devil population in the past decade. The devils that arrived in Fort Wayne are disease-free and are part of an "insurance population" for this endangered species. This insurance population could serve as a back-up in the event that Tasmanian devils became extinct in the wild.

"The Fort Wayne Children's Zoo has worked closely with the *Save the Tasmanian Devil Program* to ensure we've created the best possible facility for the Tasmanian devils and that our talented staff is fully trained on their husbandry needs," says Dr. Joe Smith, Director of Animal Programs. "Key staff members traveled to Australia in 2015 to work directly with the species and train under Tasmanian devil experts. After this two-year process, the zoo is thrilled to have Tasmanian devils here once again."

From 1987-2004, the zoo housed 12 Tasmanian devils, more than any other North American zoo. One of these devils was Coolah, who was the last Tasmanian devil living anywhere in the world outside of Australia when he died in 2004.

Native only to the Australian island of Tasmania, Tasmanian devils have long fascinated Americans, especially as the wildly spinning cartoon version “Taz” grew in popularity. These furry black marsupials (pouched mammals) are about the size of a small raccoon. Tasmanian devils are listed as Endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

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**About the Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo:** The Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo’s mission is connecting kids and animals, strengthening families, and inspiring people to care. The zoo is northeast Indiana’s largest tourist attraction, hosting more than 600,000 guests in 2015. The zoo received the **2015 TripAdvisor Travelers’ Choice Award**, was voted **Indiana’s #1 “Gotta-Do Summer Attraction,”** and was named the **#7 Zoo in the United States and #20 in the World by TripAdvisor** in 2015.

The zoo is a conservation leader, contributing more than \$90,000 annually to local, regional, and international efforts to protect wild animals and habitats, and participating in cooperative management programs for 91 endangered species and taxa. The zoo was named Northeast Indiana’s **Sustainable Business of the Year** in 2014.

As a self-supporting facility, the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo receives no tax dollars for operations. The zoo’s operations are funded entirely by earned revenue and donations.

The zoo is open for the 2016 season until October 9. Zoo hours are 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo | 3411 Sherman Blvd. | Fort Wayne, IN 46808 | 260.427.6800 | kidszoo.org