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NEWS RELEASE

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ELEPHANT CALF BORN AT REID PARK ZOO ON TUCSON'S BIRTHDAY!

Reid Park Zoo announces that Semba, a 24-year old African Elephant, successfully delivered a female calf at 10:55pm last night! Both mother and calf appear to be doing well, but are spending quiet time in the Click Family Elephant Care Center under the watchful eyes of the elephant team. This is Semba's third calf, but the first elephant ever born at Reid Park Zoo.

Keepers and trained volunteers have been observing Semba's moves around-the-clock since early July. Throughout the day on August 20, Semba was moving more slowly than usual, but she continued to eat and interact with the rest of the herd. At approximately 10:35pm, in the quiet of her normal evening surroundings and under the watchful eye of her Keepers, she began to exhibit signs of active labor including laying down, walking backwards, and extending her tail. She gave birth very soon after. She progressed quickly and delivered without any intervention from the staff. The calf hit the ground at exactly 10:55pm, took her first breath immediately, stood up within minutes, and began to nurse within the hour. The calf has not been named and has not been weighed yet.

"We are beyond excited," states Fred Gray, Director of Parks and Recreation. "I could not be more proud of our staff for their hard work and preparation for this important day. Our top priority is the health of Semba and her calf – and I'm pleased to hear they are both doing well. The City is committed to the future of African elephants, and leading the field of elephant care with colleagues. This is a fitting gift to the Tucson community on our 239th birthday."

The first 48-72 hours following the birth are the most essential for Semba and her calf to form a strong physical and emotional bond. Absolutely no visitors or non-essential staff members are being admitted to the Elephant Care Center at this time. Once the calf is nursing regularly and following Semba instinctually, additional areas of the holding facility will be opened for them to explore. Keepers will also be watching to make sure Semba is eating, drinking, and recovering normally from the physical stresses of labor. As the calf gains strength, she will be introduced to the rest of the herd.

"This birth, literally the largest in the history of the State of Arizona, represents a significant milestone for the Zoo," states Jason Jacobs, Zoo Administrator. "This birth would not have been possible without the vision and partnership of the City of Tucson, Reid Park Zoo, Reid Park Zoological Society, and San Diego Zoo Global." This calf's arrival is living testament to the dedication of so many generous donors and supporters who worked together to build Expedition Tanzania, with a shared goal of housing a breeding herd of elephants in Tucson. Our Zoo staff looks forward to keeping the community updated on the progress of the calf and the rest of the herd."



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For regular updates and current photos, the public can visit the Zoo's Pachyderm Pregnancy Page at: <http://reidparkzoo.org/baby-elephant-info/>. Although Semba and the unnamed calf are not currently on exhibit, they may be viewable on the Zoo Cams between the hours of 10am-2pm. The rest of the herd members will remain on exhibit intermittently throughout the day.

Media

- Viewing of the calf in the Elephant Care Center is not possible at this time.
- Zoo staff members are available for interviews by calling (520) 837-8188
- Only low resolution photos from immediately after the birth are available and can be downloaded at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/reidparkzoo/sets/72157646690410302/>
- Higher resolution photos will be added as they are available.

Reid Park Zoo is a 24-acre accredited zoo, owned and operated by the City of Tucson. Reid Park Zoo is located in central Tucson, with over 500,000 visitors each year. Admission is \$9 for adults and \$5 for children ages 2 to 14. The Zoo is open from 8am-3pm through September. For information, visitors can call (520) 791-4022 or visit the Reid Park Zoo website at www.reidparkzoo.org.

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