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Nashville Zoo Set to Open New Cassowary Exhibit on May 15

Nashville Zoo is pleased to announce the opening of a new double-wattled cassowary exhibit on Thursday, May 15. The exhibit, sponsored by the H.G. Hill Realty Company, will be prominently featured near Kangaroo Kickabout and is designed to create an ideal environment for breeding.

“Though we have had cassowaries on exhibit for many years, this new habitat gives guests a chance to rediscover these unique animals,” said Shelley Norris, avian supervisor. “We want to thank Anne Parsons and the H.G. Hill Realty board for partnering with us on this new exhibit and giving hope to a species in decline.”

“Visiting the Zoo recently brought back many warm memories of my days at Grassmere,” said Parsons, granddaughter of the company’s founder, H.G. Hill, Sr. “I’m extremely excited about the growth and plans for the future, and I’m absolutely thrilled that H.G. Hill Realty can partner with the Zoo through this beautiful new cassowary exhibit.”



Due to the cassowary’s solitary nature, the new exhibit will be split into two yards connected by gates so that the male and female can have access to each other during breeding season. Two additional yards away from public view will house another male and future offspring. Females in the wild typically mate with up to three males during a breeding season. The extra yards will connect to allow the female to interact with more than one male, accommodating a more natural habitat for cassowary breeding.

The cassowary is considered critically endangered in Australia’s rainforests due to loss of habitat, vehicle strike, dog attacks and overhunting. In captivity, breeding of this species has been very limited, and as a result the captive population’s genetic diversity is low. It is also one of the most dangerous birds in the world, with claws on its large toes, and the ability to run as fast as 30 mph and jump nearly five feet in the air.

Nashville Zoo is accredited by the prestigious Association of Zoos and Aquariums, assuring the highest standards of animal care and husbandry. Attracting more than 776,000 visitors annually, the Zoo is considered one of the top [things to do in Nashville](#). The Zoo is a non-profit organization located at 3777 Nolensville Pike and is open every day except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s Day. The mission of Nashville Zoo is to inspire a culture of understanding and discovery of our natural world through conservation, innovation and leadership. For more information about Nashville Zoo, call 615-833-1534 or visit www.nashvillezoo.org.

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