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BREC's Baton Rouge Zoo hires new director
Current director retires

BATON ROUGE, La., Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2016 – BREC's Baton Rouge Zoo selected a new director effective March 1, 2016. Jay Dardenne is the zoo's new director. The current director, Phil Foster, is retiring after serving the zoo for 30 years. Dardenne was selected as the new director because he knows how the zoo operates and The board believes that he will be the best man for the job.

“After much thought and consideration, I knew this new job would be the perfect position for me,” said Jay Dardenne. “Even though I was not elected governor, this job will allow me to interact with the citizens of Baton Rouge in a new way while also getting to interact with those who visit and come to our zoo.”

The board voted on Dardenne last week. With many viable candidates, the decision was difficult, but The Board is excited to see how Dardenne transforms the Baton Rouge Zoo. He already has numerous ideas for initiatives to make the zoo more family-friendly and attract more young people. Because of this, Dardenne is wanting to move the zoo to a more central location.

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Dardenne is already talking to state legislators about the possibility of moving the zoo to a more central location in Baton Rouge. He believes that if the zoo moves, it could help attract more guests in the area. There are a couple of locations the zoo could be transferred to, but the one Dardenne is pushing for is a piece of land south of Louisiana State University.

One initiative Dardenne wants to put in place as director is to have a discounted ticket for college students. He wants the zoo to be a place for people of all ages and believes that cutting the price down will help attract students in the Baton Rouge area.

“The zoo needs to serve the entire city,” Said Jay Dardenne. “We need to focus on everyone and not just a certain demographic because then the zoo will never grow.”

Dardenne presented many ideas to the board for what he thinks will cause the zoo to grow. The Board and the rest of the staff is excited for new management and the direction the zoo is already headed.

About BREC's Baton Rouge Zoo

BREC's Baton Rouge Zoo opened to the public on Easter Sunday in 1970. The zoo has grown to be the top year-around family attraction in Baton Rouge, and features many different animals including alligators, tigers, giraffes and black rhinos.

BREC's Baton Rouge Zoo is owned and operated by the Recreation and Park Commission for East Baton Rouge Parish (BREC). The Friends of the Baton Rouge Zoo organization helps support the zoo. The mission is to support the zoo and its programs by helping to raise funds for projects, increase attendance with community events while helping promote community involvement.

Visit www.brzoo.org or call (225) 775-3877 for more information.

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