

NEWS RELEASE



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ZOOTIQUE DESTROYED BY STORM

NORFOLK, Va. – The Virginia Zoo’s new ornament Zootique was destroyed by high winds during a storm Wednesday evening.

“The tent was designed to be wind-resistant and was staked down,” said Greg Bockheim, the Zoo’s executive director, “but last night’s winds were too strong.”

Located inside the Zoo, the tent housing the Zootique was flipped by high winds, which snapped rope and an aluminum column. The tent came to rest on the Zoo train’s railroad tracks and the tent’s frame was bent in several places. Most of the hand-blown German glass ornaments inside the tent were destroyed. The Zoo estimates the damage at up to \$15,000, including the cost of replacing the tent and lost revenue from destroyed ornaments.

Proceeds from the ornaments, which ranged from \$1 to \$15 each, would have helped fund the Zoo’s new Veterinary Hospital and Animal Wellness Campus. The Zootique was scheduled to be open daily through Valentine’s Day, but will now be closed indefinitely. Train rides will also be suspended until the tracks can be cleared and inspected.

“We’d like to reopen the Zootique if we can, but it would take a long time,” said Bockheim. “We still have a significant inventory of ornaments, though, and people can still purchase them from our gift shop.” He added that the Zoo also offers many other fun and interesting gifts, including Zoo-themed merchandise, Zoodoptions and special behind-the-scenes tours.

More information on Zoo gifts is available at www.virginiazoo.org.

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ZOOTIQUE, 2 OF 2



The Virginia Zoo's ornament Zootique Thursday morning, Dec. 8, 2011, after high winds Wednesday night flipped the tent and destroyed most of the ornaments inside (Virginia Zoo photo by Winfield Danielson).

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As an accredited Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) facility, the Virginia Zoo exhibits more than 400 animals on 53 beautifully landscaped acres. For more than a century, the Virginia Zoo has demonstrated a commitment to education and conservation, and offered a fun-filled day for visitors of any age. Open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and located at 3500 Granby Street in Norfolk. Daily admission prices are \$11.00 for adults, \$10.00 for seniors (age 62 and over) and \$9.00 for children ages 2-11. Visit www.virginiazoo.org or call (757) 441-2374 for more information.