



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Electric Eel Makes Holiday Lights Twinkle At The Living Planet Aquarium**

**Sandy, Utah** --- The Living Planet Aquarium is shocking visitors with its Christmas display which uses an Electric eel to flash the lights on its tree.

A Christmas display in the 'Journey To South America' gallery is blinking by using the energy generated by an electric eel in a nearby tank. "We took the voltage produced by the eel via stainless steel electrodes and used it to power a sequencer," said Terry Smith, Project Manager at Cache Valley Electric. "The sequencer takes the voltage the eel produces and operates circuitry that flashes the lights, fast or slow, based on the level of voltage he puts out," said Smith. Each time the eel moves, the lights on the 5ft tall tree flash intermittently using 4 strands of holiday lights.

Electric eels live in the murky streams and ponds of the Amazon and Orinoco basins of South America. These famous freshwater predators get their name from the enormous electrical charge they can generate to stun prey and dissuade predators. Their bodies contain electric organs with about 6,000 specialized cells called electrocytes that store power like tiny batteries. When threatened or attacking prey, these cells will discharge simultaneously, emitting a burst of at least 600 volts, five times the power of a standard U.S. wall socket.

The aquarium in Sandy, just south of Salt Lake City, features the Electric eel as part of the permanent South American freshwater exhibit. "Visitors can visually and audibly experience the power of our Electric eel and get a real sense of how amazing this creature is," said Angie Hyde, Director of Public Relations & Marketing. "We thought we'd put a festive twist on it for the holidays which has been a huge hit with our members and visitors."



The Electric eel display is made possible by Bill Carnell, Terry Smith, Jim Laub and Jody Jenkins of Cache Valley Electric, and will be available to visitors through December 31, 2011.

Check out the electric eel in action here: <http://youtu.be/8oS9YuGIWMU>

### **The Living Planet Mission Statement**

The Living Planet Aquarium inspires people to explore, discover and learn about Earth's diverse ecosystems.

### **Quick Facts**

What: Electric Eel Christmas Tree Display  
When: Now through December 31, 2011  
Where: 725 E 10600 S in Sandy  
Sponsor: Cache Valley Electric  
Admission: Free with purchase of aquarium admission  
Information: [www.thelivingplanet.com](http://www.thelivingplanet.com) (801) 355-FISH (3474)



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