



Contact: Angie Hyde
Director of PR and Marketing
801-712-3966
Angie.h@thelivingplanet.com

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PENGUIN EXHIBIT SCHEDULED TO OPEN AT THE LIVING PLANET AQUARIUM

Piranha and caiman and...PENGUINS?? Oh My!

Sandy, UT (March 15, 2010) --- After months of anticipation, excitement and exhibit building, **The Penguin Encounter**, sponsored by Mountain America Credit Union, opens *Friday, March 26, 2010* at The Living Planet Aquarium in Sandy, Utah.

There are 17 species of penguins in the world, and The Living Planet Aquarium is happy to welcome Gentoo penguins to Utah! Gentoo penguins live in a cool climate in the Falkland Islands, just off of the south-east coast of South America. They eat fish, love to swim, and live in colonies (or groups of penguins). **The Penguin Encounter** exhibit will be home to 11 captive raised Gentoo penguins. When guests enter the exhibit they will find themselves immersed in a “Falkland Island Research Station” where they will have the chance to observe the unique behaviors of these aquatic birds as they splash, dive and “fly” underwater in their naturalistic habitat. On land, penguins are not very graceful, but you’ll soon understand why everyone says these birds really “fly” underwater. With paddle-like wings providing propulsion, and their feet and tail providing steering and braking, these animals will amaze everyone with their agility and speed below the water. Gentoo penguins can swim up to 17 miles per hour, declaring them the fastest species of penguins.

Guests will also have the opportunity to view these penguins very selectively choosing the best pebbles for nesting materials and mating rituals. The expectation is at some time in the future these pairs will provide hours of fascination when eggs are laid, hatched and baby penguins are reared by their parents. ”We could expect breeding from the adult penguins within a year or sooner. The younger penguins won’t be ready to breed for 2-3 more years” Said Deana Walz, Aviculturist. This will make **The Penguin Encounter** not only a must see exhibit . . . it will be a “must see again and again” exhibit.

The Penguin Encounter will be a fun and educational experience in several other ways as well. Video displays will teach guests why penguins gave up the skies for the ocean, why penguins molt, and behaviors to look for in the Gentoo colony. Interactive components will include a touch screen that explains why penguins are allowed to live as aquatic animals, and visitors will also be able to compare themselves to life-sized models of several different penguin species. Lively graphics throughout the exhibit will also teach about predators of penguins, and will also include a “research board” with regularly updated information about the resident penguins at the aquarium.

Penguins waddle into our hearts in popular movies and television programs. They adorn our t-shirts, line our bookshelves and appear in our holiday cards. They stand upright and march along in single file. They huddle together when cold, and they swim beautifully. They love to dress formally, and they mate for life (well, sometimes!). In other words, penguins remind us of ourselves. That makes them a natural--and powerful--choice to help explain how the changing climate conditions around us affect our precious wildlife...and us. By bringing excitement and fun to The Living Planet Aquarium, the penguins will help raise awareness of the issues facing these and the other 16 species of penguins in their natural environment. Since penguins are specialized for swimming and diving in the oceans, human-induced changes to their environment affect them more than other seabirds. Oceanic changes worldwide are causing habitat deprivation and decline in penguin populations. The survival of penguins and all other wildlife depends on our ability to protect them and their habitats. “Unfortunately, 12 out of the 17 species of penguin are experiencing rapid population decline. If we become more aware of our actions, we can help protect the environment so the natural beauty is preserved for our children’s children.” said Walz. If we are successful in protecting the penguins' environment, we are ensuring a healthier environment for ourselves and for our children.

While Gentoo penguins are not endangered, the birds that will be on display at The Living Planet Aquarium are captive raised and are not taken from the wild. These birds will be acquired from Moody Gardens in Galveston, Texas and transported to Utah via air.

Aquarium members will be allowed into the facility 1 hour early at 10am Thursday, March 25 for an exclusive “Members Only Sneak Peek” of the new exhibit. The ribbon cutting ceremony

will begin at 10:30am with Brent Andersen, aquarium Founder/CEO, Mayor Tom Dolan, and representatives from the Sandy City Chamber of Commerce. Light refreshments will be served.

The Penguin Encounter, sponsored by Mountain America Credit Union, is made possible by Cache Valley Electric, KSTU Fox13, Layton Construction, Roto Aire Filter, Smith's Food & Drug Stores, Wells Fargo, EyeQ by Infinite Mind, Jim Laub, Mike Dameworth, Bill Carnell, and Terry, Paul, Sam & Hayley Smith.

The Penguin Encounter is included with regular aquarium admission of \$9 adult; \$8 senior (65+), military and student (full-time college, with I.D.); and \$7 children 3-17. Children under 3 are admitted free of charge. Annual memberships are available. The aquarium is located on 725 E 10600 S in Sandy. It is open Sunday-Thursday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 10am-8pm. More information about The Living Planet Aquarium is available online at www.thelivingplanet.com; or by calling (801) 355-FISH (3474).

The Living Planet Aquarium is dedicated to celebrating life on Earth by fostering a greater awareness and knowledge of Earth's diverse ecosystems and creating a deeper understanding of our place in the global system of life.

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