



MAYOR
Renard U. Johnson

CITY MANAGER
Dionne Mack

CITY COUNCIL

District 1
Alejandra Chávez

District 2
Dr. Josh Acevedo

District 3
Deanna M. Rocha

District 4
Cynthia Boyar Trejo

District 5
Ivan Niño

District 6
Art Fierro

District 7
Lily Limón

District 8
Chris Canales

**NEWS
RELEASE**

06/ 18/ 2026

New Towering Presence Arrives at the El Paso Zoo and Botanical Gardens

EL PASO, Texas—The El Paso Zoo and Botanical Gardens is excited to announce the arrival of Dan, a 19-month-old male giraffe who recently joined the Zoo from Lincoln Children's Zoo in Nebraska.

Dan arrived on May 22 and successfully completed his quarantine period before being introduced to Gigi, the Zoo's resident female giraffe and potential breeding partner.

"We are absolutely thrilled to welcome Dan to our El Paso Zoo animal family," said El Paso Zoo and Botanical Gardens Director Gary Lunsford. "With the departure of Obi and Tesoro, it's exciting to re-expand the giraffe herd so the community of El Paso can connect with these amazing animals."

Dan was carefully selected through the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Species Survival Plan (SSP®) program to support and maintain healthy, genetically diverse giraffe herds for the long-term survival of the species through careful population management and conservation breeding. His addition follows the recent departure of Gigi's two sons, Obi and Tesoro, both of whom were relocated to begin their own families at Longneck Manor in Fredericksburg, Texas and Albuquerque BioPark in Albuquerque, New Mexico. When Dan reaches maturity during the next couple of years, he will have the opportunity to start a herd of his own in El Paso.

Hailing from the temperate plains of Nebraska, Dan is basking in the warmth of the Sun City. The 12 foot tall, gentle giant is bonding very well with his caretakers, and likewise with his new companion, Gigi. He loves to engage with daily enrichment, and his favorite foods include sweet potatoes and cucumbers.

Dan and Gigi have already begun spending time together behind the scenes as part of a carefully managed introduction process. To ensure the safety and well-being of both animals, Zoo staff are gradually acclimating the pair to one another before they share the African Savanna habitat. While guests may occasionally notice the giraffes spending time off exhibit during this transition period, introductions are progressing smoothly, and Zoo officials expect visitors will soon be able to see the pair together on the savanna. Early signs have been encouraging, with Gigi taking a strong liking to Dan as the two continue to build their new bond.

Through participation in the Species Survival Plan® and zoo community partnerships nationwide, the El Paso Zoo remains committed to protecting wildlife, supporting sustainable animal populations, and inspiring the community to care for species at home and around the world.

For more information about conservation efforts supported by the El Paso Zoo and Botanical Gardens, visit ElPasoZoo.org.

About the El Paso Zoo and Botanical Gardens

Spanning 35 acres, the El Paso Zoo and Botanical Gardens is home to more than 220 animal species, including many that are critically endangered. The Zoo is dedicated to celebrating wildlife and inspiring the community to reconnect with nature through education, conservation, and unforgettable experiences.

###



Good Governance
Leadership that is responsive + reliable

Media Contact: Rick Isaiás
Strategic Communications
Isaiasra@elpasotexas.gov
(M): 915.355.6611