Inside the new Campo Gorilla Reserve.

Ceremonies marked the attraction's opening.

Dignitaries display the certificates that honored the attraction's opening.

The new Campo Gorilla Reserve.

Inside the new Campo Gorilla Reserve.

Gorilla Camp

■ Zoo unveils Campo Gorilla Reserve.

Photos by Angel Gomez, Member Services Manager, and Summy Lam, IT Business Analyst

ZOO —The Los Angeles Zoo unveiled its newest habitat Nov. 8, with the opening of the new $19 million Campo Gorilla Reserve. Zoo visitors can journey along a forested pathway for close-up views of gorillas living in two separate habitats; one for a family troop of gorillas led by a silver-back male named Kelly and the other habitat for a pair of bachelors.

Scheduled to attend the opening were Councilman and Club Member Tom LaBonge, Zoo Director John Lewis and Association President Connie Morgan.

Campo Gorilla Reserve closely resembles the gorilla's native West Central African environment with trees, brush, flowers, waterfalls, climbing opportunities, a sunny grass area and a dark shady retreat. The family habitat includes Kelly, a 20-year-old silverback, and three females, Evelyn, 31; Rapunzel; 23; and her daughter, Glenda, 3. They are returning to the L.A. Zoo after a four-year stay at the Denver Zoo during construction of their new home. The bachelor group consists of two young male gorillas, Hasani, 13, and Jabari, 10, from Disney's Animal Kingdom in Florida.

"If ever there was a reason to visit the Los Angeles Zoo, this Campo Gorilla Reserve is it," said Councilmember Tom LaBonge. "It's an amazing experience to be close up to our gorilla residents inside a re-creation of a West Central African jungle. You can't miss it!"

"Historically, gorillas have been a major part of the L.A. Zoo" said Zoo Director John Lewis. "Right now is an extremely critical time for gorillas in the wild, as they are facing the challenge of both habitat destruction and being hunted in the bush meat trade. Campo Gorilla Reserve will allow the L.A. Zoo to explain to our visitors why gorillas are endangered, what we can do to help them and instill in them the passion to care about these great apes."

Campo Gorilla Reserve was funded by the Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association (GLAZA), a private, non-profit support organization; by Proposition CC, a bond measure passed in 1998 by Los Angeles voters; and through City funding. The three-quarter-acre Campo Gorilla Reserve completes the Zoo's Great Ape Forest and distinguishes the Los Angeles Zoo as one of only a handful of zoos to house three species of great apes: chimpanzees, orangutans and gorillas.
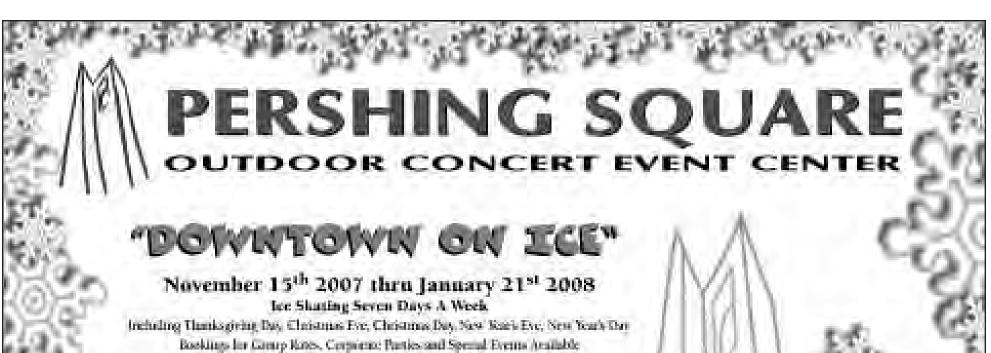

GLAZA's support for Campo Gorilla Reserve will continue well beyond its opening. GLAZA-trained docents will tour thousands of adults and children expected to visit the Reserve on a week-ly basis. Also, a GLAZA-sponsored Discovery Cart at the exhibit, funded by the Flora L. Thornton Foundation, will be staffed by Los Angeles Zoo educators to enhance public under-standing of gorillas.

Campo Gorilla Reserve allows Zoo visitors to view the gorillas from five different areas, two of which are glass fronted which allows the possibil-ity for extremely close observation of the apes in their habitat. The reserve is landscaped with hun-dreds of plants including bamboo, palms, pome-granates, ferns and much more. Campo Gorilla Reserve is proudly sponsored by Nestlé Juicy Juice.

The Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens is in Griffith Park at the junction of the Ventura (134) and Golden State (5) Freeways. Admission is $10 for adults and $5 for children 2 to 12. For information, call (323) 644-4200 or visit the L.A. Zoo Website at www.lazoo.org