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For Immediate Release

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‘TOPPING OFF’ CEREMONY AT FRANKLIN PARK ZOO CELEBRATES PROGRESS IN COMPLETING STATE-OF-THE ART GORILLA EXHIBITION

Special Ceremony will take place at the Zoo on January 24, 2007 at Noon

(Boston, MA)--Jan.11, 2007 – Commodore Builders today announced a special ‘Topping Off’ ceremony to celebrate progress in the construction of Franklin Park Zoo’s Gorilla Exhibit. The event will take place at Franklin Park Zoo, on Wednesday, January 24th at 12:00 p.m.

The design and construction modifications to the Gorilla Exhibit will provide increased viewing opportunities—and increased safety--for visitors. Now, visitors will have the opportunity to stand face-to-face with these magnificent animals, separated by three layers of safety glass. A zookeeper interaction area has also been constructed, where guests can enjoy unobstructed views of feedings and training sessions with the gorillas.

“We couldn’t be more pleased with the progress we’re making on the new Gorilla Exhibit,” said **Tom Comeau**, Vice President and Project Executive for **Commodore Builders**. “When you’re renovating a zoo, the inhabitants don’t go home at 5 o’clock the way they do in a downtown high-rise. While the Gorillas aren’t on exhibit during construction, they are in the vicinity, so every precaution has to be taken to keep them healthy and undisturbed. Because of this, the Zoo project forced us to be as innovative as possible in our construction management process,” said Comeau who led the project with **Tom Gaul**, Superintendent and **Leeann Foley**, Project Manager.

The construction taking place contains many unique elements that require both the construction and design teams to adapt and respond in the field, as new materials come together for the first time in this prototypical installation. For example, tying the structural metal steel and the ceiling mesh together gave rise to a set of high-altitude challenges not encountered in an average high-rise fit-out.

“This new state-of-the art facility is a marvel not just from an exhibition point of view, but also from a construction standpoint,” said **Tom Gaul**, Superintendent, Commodore Builders. “The old moats had to be removed before the new ones could be re-installed,

and the observation area required installation of three-inch thick, laminated glass.”

The renovations also provide the gorillas with more vertical space in which to climb and play. The steel support structure will be covered by realistic looking trees and rock walls to provide an authentic habitat for the Gorillas.

“Our goal with any of our exhibits is to provide the animals with an environment that is as similar to their natural habitat as possible,” said **John Linehan**, Zoo New England’s President and CEO. “Commodore’s use of unique materials in the installation of this Exhibit has contributed to the creation of a more spacious and natural living environment for the Gorillas, while providing our guests with a safe and more realistic opportunity to view them in that environment.”

During the ‘Topping Off’ ceremony, Commodore team members will hoist a large tropical plant into the air and anchor it on one of the highest points of the Gorilla Exhibit. Oftentimes a steel beam is raised in ceremonies such as this, but a tropical tree better captures the spirit of this unusual project and will remain a permanent part of the Exhibit. The centuries-old-ceremony of ‘Topping Off’ has evolved through the years, and in this case stands to represent good luck for the gorillas, as well as the safe completion of a project for the construction team.

About Commodore Builders:

Commodore’s mission is to set a new standard of excellence for the delivery of construction management services to our clients. Commodore believes the quality of the construction *process* is as important as the quality of the construction. From project conception to preconstruction, execution, closeout and warranty service, Commodore’s role is to anticipate and manage the risks inherent in construction. Commodore takes charge, so the process for clients is easy and the outcome is excellence in execution.

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