

## How to Communicate Your Support:

1. **Be Brief and Respectful:** Keep your message concise.
  - You will probably go to v-mail so keep it to about a minute to a minute and a half. Write it out if that will help. (If you sound like you are reading it to them, that is ok. Just let them know that you wrote it out so that it would be concise, and you didn't forget to say something.)
  - Remember to state your name and where you live.
  - Express your support for the zoo initiative, emphasizing its importance to you and the community. You can use the talking points below.
  - Personalize it for you.
  - The last thing you should do is to express gratitude for their time and consideration. A respectful and appreciative tone can go a long way.
  
2. **Talking points.** Choose 1 or 2 of the following talking points and say them in your own words:
  - a. **Economic Benefits.** Different from other tax initiatives, there is a financial ROI. For \$65M investment over 30 years, the residents will see an increase of \$117M in the first 6 years. Plus, 100s of jobs and boosting local tourism creating even more tax revenue from out-of-towners.
  
  - b. **Education.** The zoo plans to offer educational programs for 15,000 students annually, enhancing STEM learning opportunities outside the classroom. Schools within Limestone County will receive free admission for field trips and will no longer have to travel to Birmingham or Nashville. While having a zoo closer won't stop the accidental leaving of a child like that happened with the Julian Newman Elementary School student from Athens a couple years ago, but it will make it a lot easier and quicker to get them back to loved ones.
  
  - c. **Community Pride and Identity:** The North Alabama Zoo represents a unique opportunity for Limestone County to establish a landmark that stands apart from neighboring communities such as Madison, Huntsville, and Decatur. It embodies a chance for residents to enjoy and take pride in something distinctly their own, fostering a sense of community identity and belonging. This zoo isn't just an

attraction; it's a statement of Limestone County's commitment to its residents and their quality of life. Residents will receive unheard of discounted admissions to the zoo, plus 1 free day per month.

- d. **Quality of Life Benefits.** The notion that a modern zoo is merely an attraction is outdated. Today, accredited zoos, which North Alabama Zoo will be, are designed as comprehensive centers for conservation, education, and community engagement, providing extensive quality of life benefits. They serve as vital educational resources, promoting conservation awareness and facilitating vital connections with the natural world. Science has shown modern zoos contribute significantly to the physical and mental well-being of their communities by offering spaces for leisure, learning, “green” connections, animal encounters, and social interaction, thus playing a crucial role in enhancing the overall quality of life.
- e. **Accessibility and Inclusivity:** The North Alabama Zoo is dedicated to being accessible and inclusive, ensuring all members of the community, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds, can experience the zoo's offerings. With plans for special programs catering to individuals with disabilities, discounted admissions for county residents, and free admission days, the zoo aims to be a welcoming space for everyone, regardless of socioeconomic status. This focus on inclusivity not only enhances the community's social fabric but also ensures that the benefits of the zoo are shared broadly, reinforcing the zoo's role as a vital community asset.
- f. **Strengthening Family Bonds:** The North Alabama Zoo will provide a communal space for families to spend quality time together, fostering stronger family bonds through shared experiences and discoveries. Offering educational and fun activities, the zoo becomes a place where memories are made, strengthening family relationships, and encouraging intergenerational learning and bonding. With its universal appeal, the zoo offers something for every member of the family, regardless of age or gender, ensuring that each visit is unique and memorable. This initiative underlines the zoo’s commitment to supporting the foundational unit of our community—the family—by providing enriching experiences that bring families closer.