

# HERITAGE SERVICES

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April 14, 2010

The Honorable Senator Benjamin Nelson  
United States Senate  
Washington DC 20510

*Board of Directors*

*Chairman*

Walter Scott, Jr.

Dear Senator Nelson,

*Vice Chairman*

John Gottschalk

I am writing today to officially submit a request, on behalf of Heritage Services, to the Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee to construct an Education and Interactive Learning Center for Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo. The Learning Center will create and allow the expansion of an unmatched opportunity for the City of Omaha to provide educational opportunities for Omaha students.

*Directors*

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For the first time ever during this 2009-2010 school year, Omaha's Zoo is piloting a full time high school on the Zoo campus where we are educating 42 students from Papillion LaVista High School. The Zoo has prepared a specific curriculum just for these students, and they are thriving in their current and unique environment. In addition, the Zoo is also housing a full-time kindergarten class from Bancroft Elementary School. The Zoo receives no educational dollars for providing these high quality educational opportunities to Omaha students, but as our schools continue to grow and require more space for students, it does provide an excellent alternative choice where schools can send students interested in the curriculum the Omaha Zoo provides, while saving our public schools from investing additional resources for expansion.

*President*

Susan L. Morris

*Secretary*

Carr E. Heaney, Jr.

Over \$115 million has been raised from private sources for improvements during the past 20 years at Omaha's Zoo and plans are underway to identify several new anchor projects for the region to enjoy. This funding request for the Education and Interactive Learning Center will continue to improve economic development activities in a blighted South Omaha neighborhood where the Zoo serves as an important public resource.

*Treasurer*

Jennifer L. Callahan

Omaha has been recognized as a vibrant and growing community with projects such as the Qwest Center, Holland Performing Arts Center and the investment many private companies are making to expand their operations. This important initiative is one where public and private dollars can be leveraged to positively impact our community, specifically students. Our board continues to fully embrace this project and would appreciate your help in submitting it to the Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee.

Sincerely,



Walter Scott, Jr.