



Firefighters to apes' rescue

By **PERRY BEEMAN**
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Here's proof that one man's trash can be a few apes' treasure.
The problem is that rainforest vines aren't found in the Iowa wild.

So the Iowa Primate Learning Sanctuary is soliciting help from 860 Iowa fire departments, with plans to hang hoses in a building and outdoor enclosure that will serve as a select group of apes' initial home in Des Moines, said Peter Clay, senior animal caretaker. Workers also will make swings and hammocks for the apes.

The 200-acre research sanctuary along the Des Moines River in southeast Des Moines will welcome its first apes, two orangutans, next month. They later will be joined by gorillas, bonobos and chimpanzees.

"We are doing this to offer the highest quality of life," Clay said of the hose solicitation. "The orangutans' natural world is a very complex world. Earning a living as a wild orangutan requires a lot of travel, most of it above ground. We are offering an environment that will simulate that."

Sanctuary spokesman Al Setka said the fire-hose-as-vine technique is borrowed from zoos.

The first dozen hoses came from the Des Moines Fire Department. The department's maintenance supervisor, David Harmon, said they were gathering dust in a shed.

"We're delighted they can use them," Harmon said.

Donated hoses all should be at least 10 feet long, lined in rubber with a cotton jacket.

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Can I see them?

Public visits, by appointment, are expected to begin sometime this summer. Small groups will be able to watch the apes at close range through windows. Call the sanctuary at (515) 243-3580 or visit GreatApes.org or www.IowaGreatApes.org.