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Orangutans to arrive in July

The Great Ape Trust is asking for donations to help with expansion plans.

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Des Moines' newly renamed great-ape research center should welcome its first orangutans in July, founder Ted Townsend said Thursday.

Townsend also announced a new public fund-raising campaign for the Great Ape Trust of Iowa, formerly called the Iowa Primate Learning Sanctuary.

Officials of the prominent American Zoo and Aquarium Association are expected to inspect the nearly complete orangutan building next week. Workers from the National Zoo in Washington, D.C., will visit later to approve the transfer of orangutans Azy and Indah from the zoo to the 200-acre southeast Des Moines sanctuary.

Azy, a 26-year-old male who weighs 280 pounds, and his sister, 23-year-old Indah (125 pounds), will be the first of the great apes to move to the Des Moines research facility's three-story orangutan building.

Bonobos from Georgia State University's Language Research Center near Atlanta, Ga., are expected to arrive at their 13,000-square-foot Des Moines building this fall. Gorillas and chimpanzees, the world's other two great apes, will come later.



SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

Coming: Indah, shown here, and brother Azy are likely to be transferred to Des Moines from Washington, D.C.

More on apes

ON TV : Great Ape Trust of Iowa researcher Robert Shumaker will be interviewed on "Jane Goodall's State of the Great Ape" on cable station Animal Planet at 7 p.m. Saturday.

ON THE WEB : The Des Moines facility has a retooled Web site at www.greatapetrust.org. Visit the site for details on how to arrange to see the apes.

IN IOWA : The sanctuary's appeal for used fire hoses to use as vines for the apes so far has netted 4,600 feet from departments around Iowa and from the Principal Financial Group and Kiewit Industrial.

Townsend said the center's new name reflects the group's mission and its importance worldwide.

"What is being created in Iowa for the great apes is phenomenal, but it goes well beyond buildings and research efforts," said the facility's bonobo researcher, Sue Savage-Rumbaugh. "Great Ape Trust will exemplify the essence and soul of great apes."

The trust's stature as one of the largest ape facilities in the United States helped it land a June 18-20 international meeting of experts working on the bonobo Species Survival Plan.

To help with the Des Moines facilities' expansion plans, the trust is asking for private donations. Donors of \$25, \$100 or \$250 will receive items ranging from caps to books autographed by key scientists.