
News Release

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Thousands of Dakota County Third Graders Take Field Trips to the Minnesota Zoo

Students follow a syllabus that fulfills STEM curriculum requirements

Apple Valley, Minn. – More than 2,000 third grade students from School District 196 are learning to think like scientists and wildlife conservationists by participating in the Zoo Safari program at the Minnesota Zoo – made possible by a partnership with Flint Hills Resources that first began in 1989.

The program allows third graders from District 196 to experience the zoo while following a syllabus that aligns with state STEM curriculum standards. These field trips spark students' interest in science and promote academic achievement. The field trip is free for all third grade students, and for some, the Minnesota Zoo Safari field trip is their first and only visit to any zoo.

“We are proud of and grateful for our partnership with Flint Hills Resources, which has been supporting the Zoo Safari program since 2006,” said John Frawley, director and president of the Minnesota Zoo. “The future of saving our wildlife must involve the entire community, which is why it is critical that the zoo continues to work with our community to help equip each new generation with the scientific, social and emotional skills they need to protect habitats in both natural and developed areas.”

Studies show that hands-on STEM learning can help develop children's problem solving skills and understanding of the natural world. [Click here](#) to see a photo of students experiencing the Zoo Safari program.

“The Zoo Safari program provides an opportunity for students in our community to grow and learn right in their own backyard,” said Heather Rein, director of community affairs at Flint Hills Resources. “The Minnesota Zoo is a wonderful partner and an asset to Minnesota.”

About the Minnesota Zoo

The Minnesota Zoo is a year-round destination located in Apple Valley, just minutes south of Mall of America. Its mission is to connect people, animals and the natural world to save wildlife. The Minnesota Zoo is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and an institutional member of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums. More information about the zoo is available at mnzoo.org.

About Flint Hills Resources

Flint Hills Resources, LLC, through its subsidiaries, is an industry leader in refining, chemicals and biofuels, with operations primarily in Texas and the Midwest. Its manufacturing capability is built upon six decades of refining experience, and the company has expanded its operations through capital projects and acquisitions worth more than \$11 billion since 2002. Flint Hills Resources' subsidiaries produce and market gasoline, diesel, jet fuel, asphalt, ethanol, biodiesel, liquefied natural gas, olefins, polymers, intermediate chemicals, as well as base oils, corn oil, and dried distillers grain. The company is based in Wichita, Kansas, and its more than 5,000 employees strive to create value for customers and society. More information about the company is available at pinebendrefinery.com.

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