

# The ZOO in Gulf Breeze reopens in February

By Pam Brannon  
Special to Splash!

The Zoo Northwest Florida will reopen sometime in the first half of February. At least that is the plan right now, according to Zoo founder Pat Quinn.

"The new owner and his family and staff have been here working around the clock making repairs and redesigning some things," Quinn said Monday. "The plan is to open sometime in the first couple weeks of February."

Quinn said new fencing is being put in place, and some old cages are being replaced.

"There will also be some new animals brought in before the opening to the public," he said. "We will have a really big grand opening event."

He said new owner Eric Morgenson, who in December purchased The Zoo and all the property it sits, brought his entire family – his wife and four children – here just before Christmas.

"They all were working right alongside his staff to make repairs and improvements," Quinn said. "Then he went back to

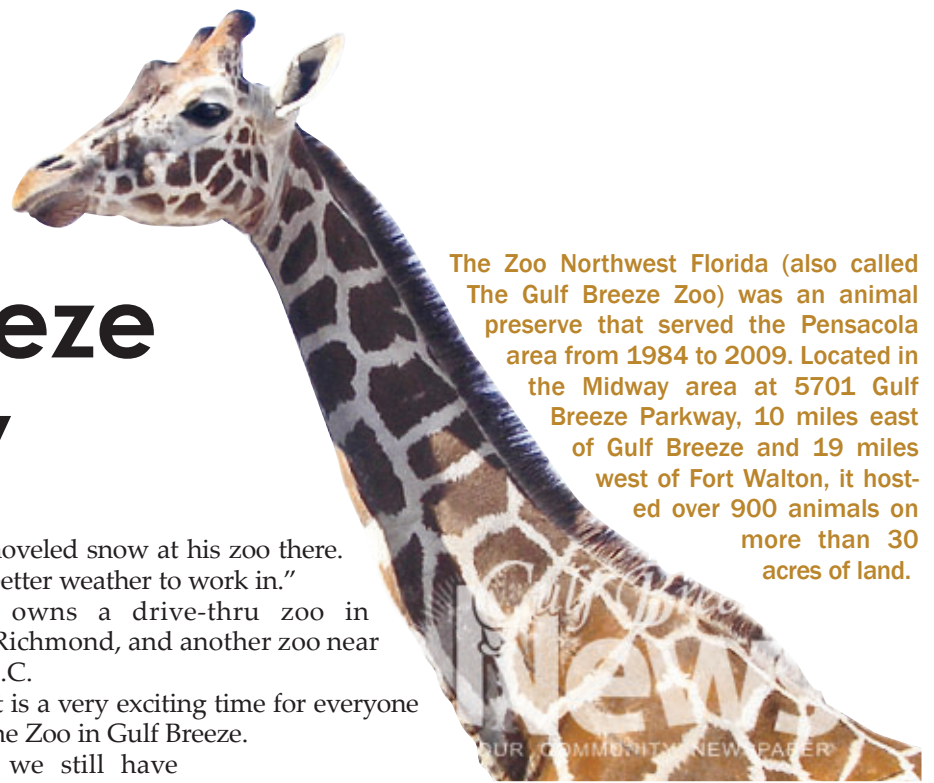
Virginia and shoveled snow at his zoo there. This was sure better weather to work in."

Morgenson owns a drive-thru zoo in Virginia, near Richmond, and another zoo near Washington, D.C.

Quinn said it is a very exciting time for everyone connected to The Zoo in Gulf Breeze.

"Of course, we still have people working here to get ready for the big re-opening event. And we have always kept a small staff to take care of the animals daily, too," Quinn said. "But seeing this zoo stay a zoo and re-open to the public will be my Christmas, New Year's, Birthday for-the-rest-of-my-life present all rolled into one. It is our dream kept alive."

The Zoo Northwest Florida (also called The Gulf Breeze Zoo) was an animal preserve that served the Pensacola area from 1984 to 2009. Located in the Midway area at 5701 Gulf Breeze Parkway, 10 miles east of Gulf Breeze and 19 miles west of Fort Walton, it hosted over 900 animals on more than 30 acres of land.



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