



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Jack Wlezien, 312-558-1770
The National Elephant Center

Liz Johnson, 713-265-1514
Waste Management

**The National Elephant Center unveils a bold new
initiative for global elephant conservation**

*Waste Management works with Center to support elephant
conservation initiatives by AZA zoos*

HOUSTON (Feb.7, 2008) — A new model for excellence in elephant care and conservation is a reality today as The National Elephant Center announced plans to create a national elephant conservation center in central Florida made possible, in part, by Waste Management's involvement. The facility will be under construction for several months with the first elephants expected to arrive in 2009.

“Elephants are among our most endangered animals in the world, and their future depends on innovative programs that integrate science, research, education and animal care expertise. The National Elephant Center will play a vital role in addressing the critical need for elephant population management and will be an international resource in elephant conservation,” said Center Board President Mark C. Reed, and Executive Director of the Sedgwick County Zoo. “Waste Management’s support of the project, including its nominal lease to the Center of the land, will help provide a perfect home for our elephants and programs.”

The Center is located on about 300 acres owned by Waste Management in Okeechobee, Fla. It includes open space for elephants to roam and explore while providing a variety of natural waterholes for wallowing. It is adjacent to property that Waste Management maintains as a natural area certified by the Wildlife Habitat Council that provides food and nesting areas for threatened Florida sandhill cranes and other species. About 900 acres of open space separate the Center from Waste Management's nearby sanitary landfill, which serves the surrounding communities.

“When we look at our landfills, we see them as a form of recycling - beneficial reuse of the land at our sites,” said Waste Management CEO David Steiner. “Our landfills provide power to our communities through landfill gas to energy projects. They also supply tens of thousands of acres for community parks, recreation centers and wildlife habitats. We are proud of our ability to provide one of our landfill resources for a program that helps ensure the future of one of nature's most majestic resources, elephants.”

“There are nearly 290 elephants in 77 North American zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and this facility will support those institutions in a variety of ways, including population management, artificial insemination and breeding, research and conservation activities, and training for keepers, curators and veterinarians,” said Reed, who along with nine other zoo directors from around the country serves on the Center's board of directors.

Facilities for the Center, including barns for the elephants, are under development. The project is being built with the support of numerous public and private donations, including corporations, individuals and AZA-accredited zoos. The Center's board is in the process of hiring technical staff to get the Center fully operational with elephants onsite in 2009.

The Center is an integral part of AZA accredited zoo's collaborative efforts to help save elephants including population management support, short- and long-term holding for bull elephants, a home for elephants when their zoo facilities are being renovated, quarantine, and short-term residency when herd dynamics change to test compatibility and new social groupings.

Reed said the Center will also provide a centralized training facility for keepers, curators, veterinarians and other professionals that works with elephants, and it will provide an important space for research that will help zoos aid the Asian and African elephant populations in the wild. North American zoos already help support more than 85 conservation projects in zoos and in the wild to learn more about elephants.

The National Elephant Center is a nonprofit organization that envisions becoming the global leader in elephant population management. It is committed to ensuring the future of elephants in zoos and in the wild by advancing science in artificial insemination and breeding; promoting elephant research and conservation programs; providing specialized training for elephant caregivers; and becoming a voice for elephants nationally and internationally through advocacy and collaboration. For more information about the national Center, visit www.TheNationalElephantCenter.org.

About Waste Management

Waste Management, based in Houston, Texas, is the leading provider of comprehensive waste management services in North America. Its subsidiaries provide collection, transfer, recycling and resource recovery, and disposal services. It is also a leading developer, operator and owner of waste-to-energy and landfill gas-to-energy facilities in the United States. Customers include residential, commercial, industrial, and municipal customers throughout North America. More information about how Waste Management Thinks Green can be found at www.thinkgreen.com

###