

Lions and tigers and bears, oh my!



A New Zoo place to play! **Kids Cove**

"We appreciate the high quality end result of our partnership and look forward to working with Merit Construction, Inc. in the future."

Many hundreds of thousands of zoo visitors still received a high quality experience at the zoo while all this work went on which is testimonial to the efforts of Merit managers, crews and sub-contractors."

**Jim Vlna, executive director,
the Knoxville Zoo**



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While life at the new Kid's Cove is now more along the lines of pigs and beavers and goats, Merit Construction, Inc. faced an exotic challenge when it came to the construction of the Knoxville Zoo's most fun-filled exhibit ever.

The \$6 million project, based on an early 1900s Appalachian farm, features a new animal contact yard with a barn, a huge playground, walk-through aviary, beaver pond, water play area, the only permanent carousel in Knoxville, a gift shop and concession stands.

Kid's Cove is built on three acres that previously included the zoo's old front entrance and gift shop, bear and baboon exhibits and the old elephant yard.

Part of Merit's initial work on Kid's Cove was to transform the old concrete grotto areas into three distinct, but unified areas. Previously an extremely steep area, Merit leveled the grounds with more than 600 truckloads of engineered fill.

"This was a challenging project, but extremely rewarding to work on," said Steve Heatherly, senior vice president for Merit Construction. *"It's not everyday we build a child-sized barn or a 500-foot sandbox. Though it was a lot of fun, we took it every bit as seriously as any of our projects."*

Merit Construction
We live up to our name.

